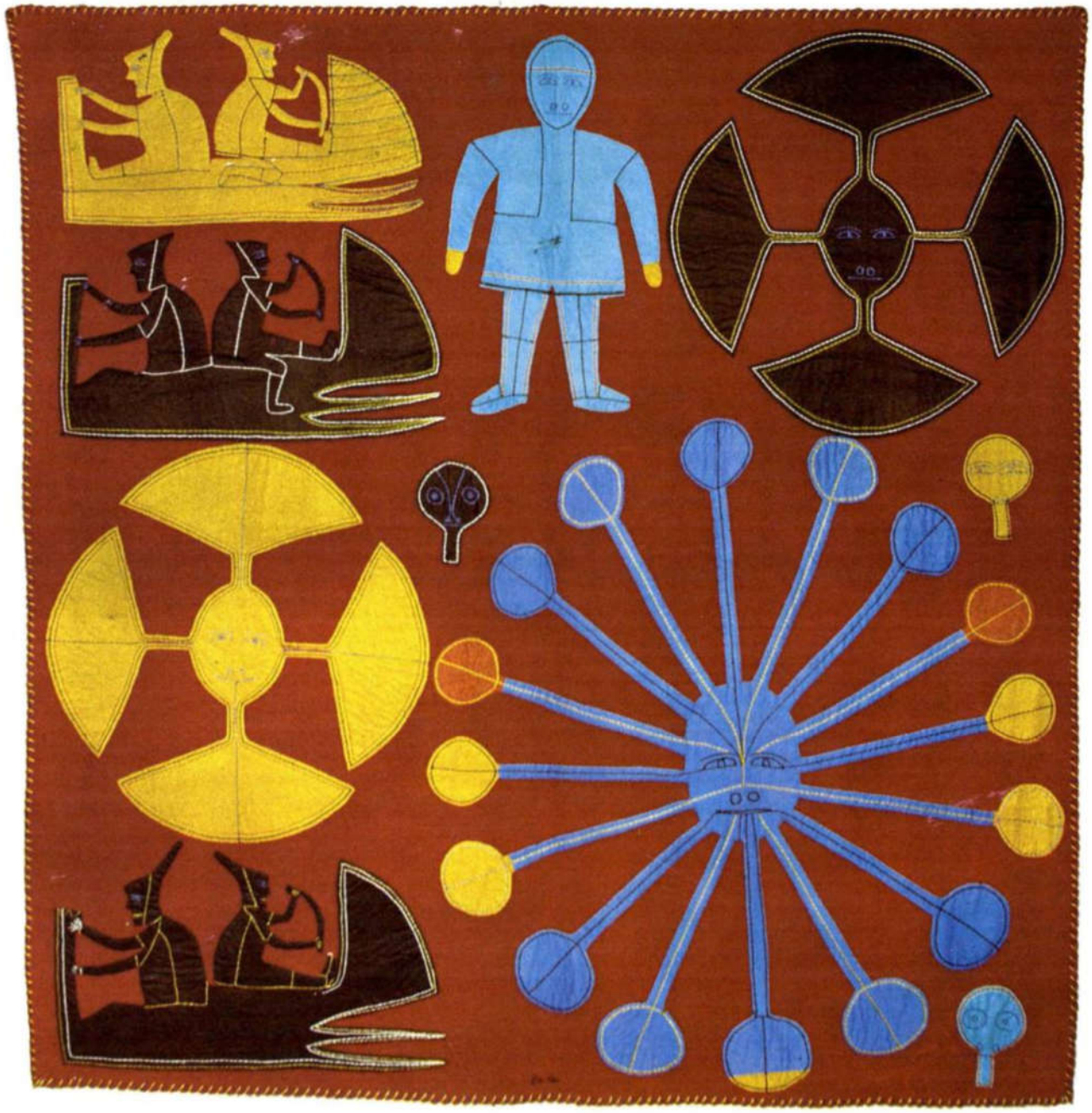
The Beaver

AUTUMN 1972



THE UNCHANGED STANDARD: "choice goods as can be bought for money"

"You are to send us home by every return of our Ships all such goods as are either defective or not acceptable to the Natives, and to inform us wherein they are deficient And also to direct us exactly as you can of what form, quality conditions every sort of goods wch. is demanded there ought to be for the best satisfaction of the Indians, And wee will do our utmost that you shall be supplied wth. every species of Commodity in perfection."

LETTER TO GOVERNOR NIXON FROM THE GOVERNOR AND COMMITTEE, LONDON, MAY 21, 1680

Hudson's Bay Company
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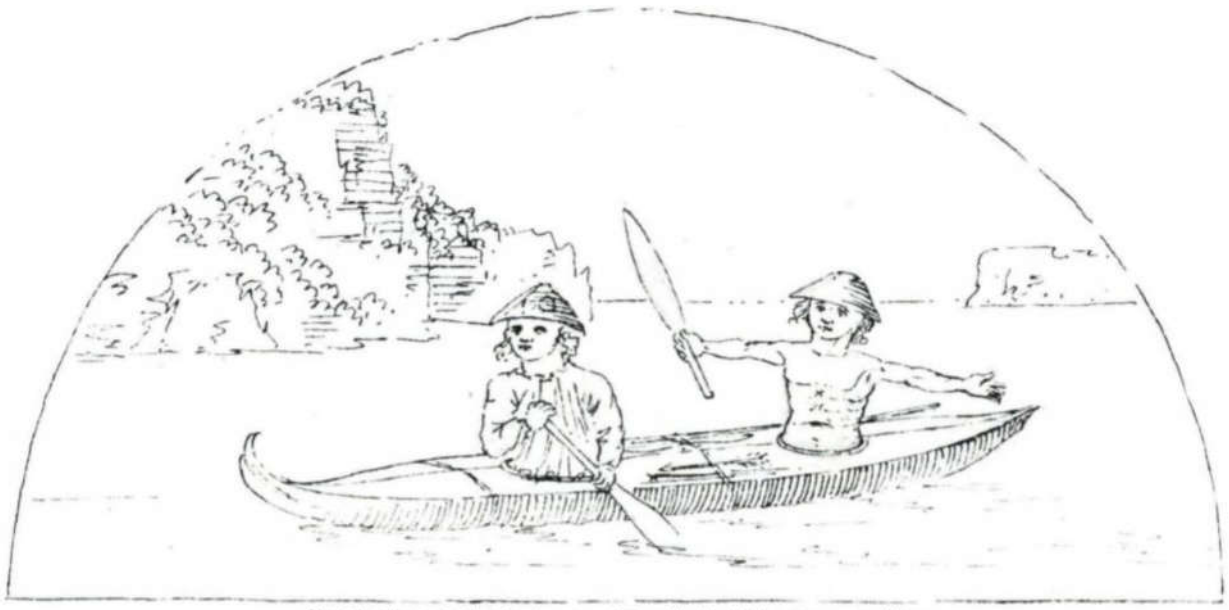
OUTFIT 303:2
$3 A YEAR

The Beaver

MAGAZINE OF THE NORTH

Editor: Helen Burgess



Sketch taken at Nootka by an artist with the Malaspina expedition.

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PUBLISHED QUARTERLY BY

HUDSON'S BAY HOUSE
77 MAIN ST.

Hudson's Bay Company
INCORPORATED 2ND MAY 1670

WINNIPEG, CANADA
R3C 2R1

Published by The Governor and Company of Adventurers of England Trading into Hudson's Bay, known as the Hudson's Bay Company. The interests of THE BEAVER cover the territory with which the Company has been or is now associated. Annual subscription, $3; three years for $8; single copy, 75 cents. While every care will be taken of manuscripts and illustrations submitted, no liability will be assumed for loss. Contents copyright. Printed in Canada.

Second class mail registration number 1401. Postage paid at Winnipeg.

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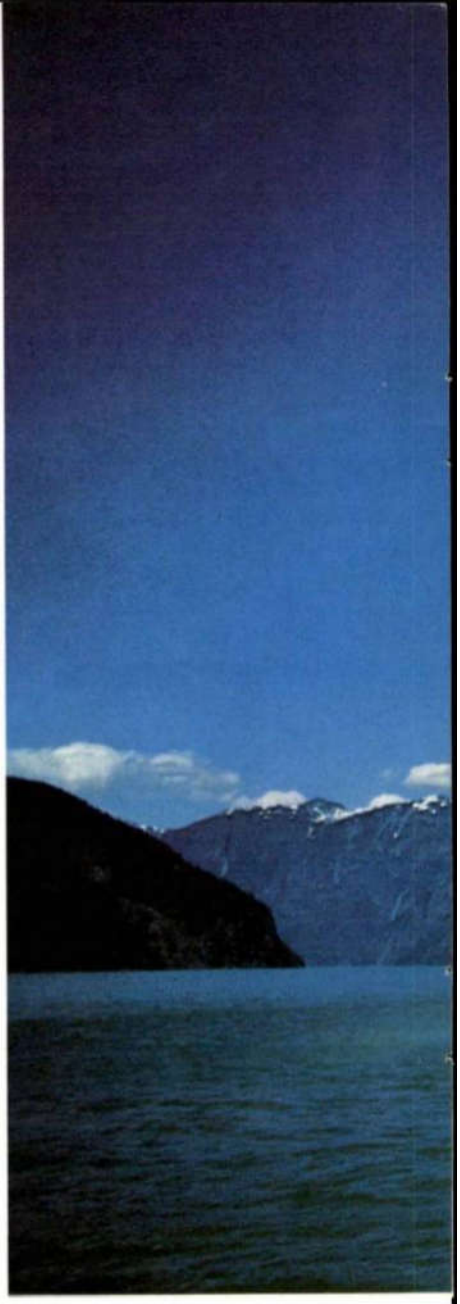
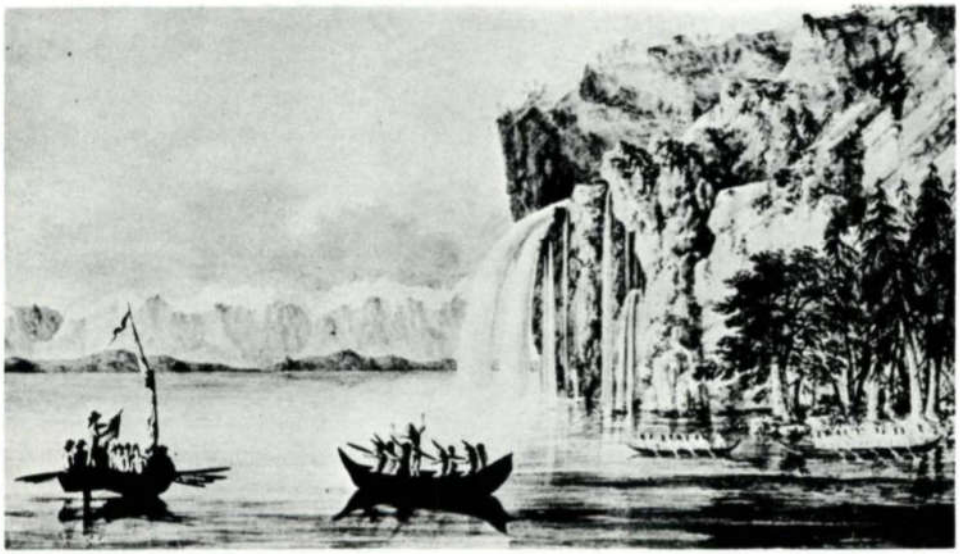
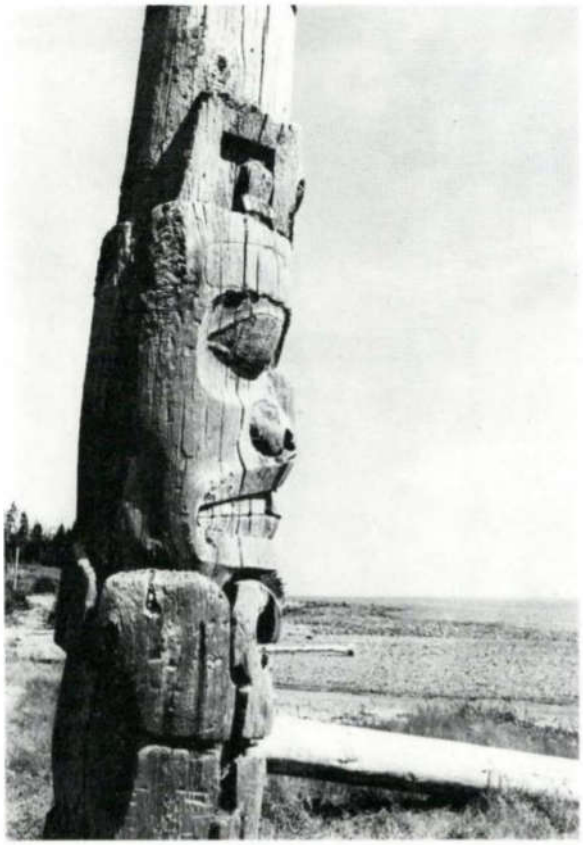


Indian canoes meet the Spanish longboat near the waterfall at Knight Inlet, B.C. On the right, the scene today. Photographs are by Toby Molenaar, sketches are from the Museo de America, Madrid.



Recently, Author Frederic V. Grunfeld and his wife Photographer Toby Molenaar, in co-operation with the Riveredge Foundation of Calgary, retraced the route of the 1791-92 expedition of Alessandro Malaspina along the Northwest Coast. They found much of the shoreline still empty; in some areas virtually the only change in nearly two centuries was the slow deterioration of the totem poles, the 'monstrous decorations'. . .

THE FACES IN THE FOREST



THE EUROPEAN EXPLORERS who visited the Northwest Coast of America during the eighteenth century were profoundly astonished by the high level of culture they found among the Indians there. Living in one of the least accessible corners of the continent, along a thousand miles of indescribably rugged coastline, the totem-pole people were among the last native Americans to come into contact with the European and his ways. They knew nothing of writing, money or agriculture, and employed only the most rudimentary tools. Yet their handicrafts compared favourably with the best European workmanship of the time. 'Everything they have' wrote Captain Cook in his Pacific Journal of 1778, 'is as well and ingeniously made, as if they were furnished with the most complete tool chest. . . Their invention and dexterity, in all manual works, is at least equal to that of any other nation.' He spoke respectfully of the 'endless variety of carved wooden masks' which the Indians wore in their ceremonies, and of their giant totems, some of them set with pieces of mica, 'which makes them glitter, and serves to augment their enormous deformity'.

The search for the fabled Northwest Passage which impelled Cook to venture into these uncharted waters also prompted two other major European expeditions: that of the French explorer La Pérouse, who reached Alaska in 1786, and the voyages made in 1791-2 by Spanish ships under the command of the Italian-born

naval officer, Alessandro Malaspina. On board his two corvettes, the *Descubierta* and the *Atrevida*, Malaspina carried a picked band of scientists and technicians, including naturalists, astronomers and cartographers, as well as two artist-correspondents whose mission was to make a systematic pictorial record of the voyage.

When Malaspina, like the others, failed to find the passage to the Atlantic which was rumoured to exist at the 60th parallel he shifted his interest to the native population: the journals of his expedition and those of his lieutenants on the cartographic ships *Sutil* and *Mexicana* contain some of the earliest anthropological reports on the Indians of Vancouver Island and Yakutat Bay, until then almost unknown to the outside world. Like Cook, Malaspina found them an amazing people, 'quite advanced in civilization', and their giant wood sculptures filled him with 'wonderment and admiration'. At Yakutat, while one of his artists was busy sketching the main monument in the chief's cemetery, Malaspina tried to discover the religious significance of these faces in the forest, but with little success.

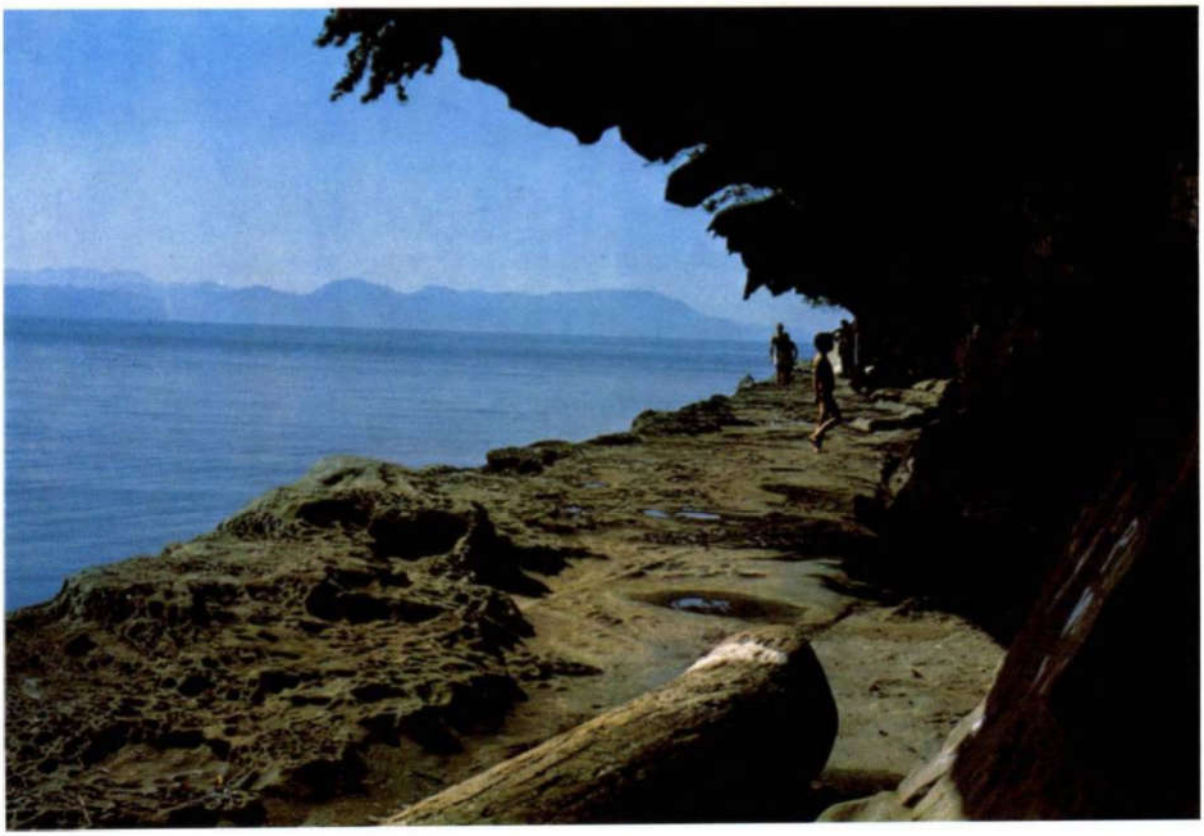
A seasoned naval commander though still in his thirties, Malaspina was renowned for his 'knowledge, lineage, nobility and elegance of person and manner, proud bearing, firmness of character and talent for society' (as the Spanish Minister of the Navy said of him). He came from a noble Genoese family, the Marcheses of Mulazzo, and it was in the ancestral *palazzo* that he was born, on November 5, 1754. He had entered the Spanish service at twenty and risen rapidly to become the most prominent captain in the navy, an officer of wide-ranging scientific and philosophical interests. For a man of his stamp there was something irresistibly fascinating in Northwest Indian society, where art was one of the main preoccupations and everything was done with style. He wrote, that 'In Europe the value of the individual is steadily diminishing,' while on the western shore, 'each man works for all and is useful to all'. The results confirmed his European rationalist vision of the noble savage, for the Indians seemed to have arrived at a kind of ideal community where private property was unknown and the chiefs worked just as hard as the rest of the tribe.

In other respects, too, this society provided food for thought. A man could keep four wives in a characteristically elegant, geometric arrangement. 'Each woman sleeps on her mat at one of the four corners of the room, and the husband visits one or the other at will, making use on these occasions not only of the silence, the darkness and modesty, but also of those flatteries which, preceding conjugal love, even here distinguish man from the animals.'

Malaspina himself had time only to gain a fleeting impression of this extraordinary culture. His corvettes were anchored at Yakutat – home of the northernmost branch of the Tlingit – from June 27 to July 5, 1791,

Malaspina (right) inside his tent.

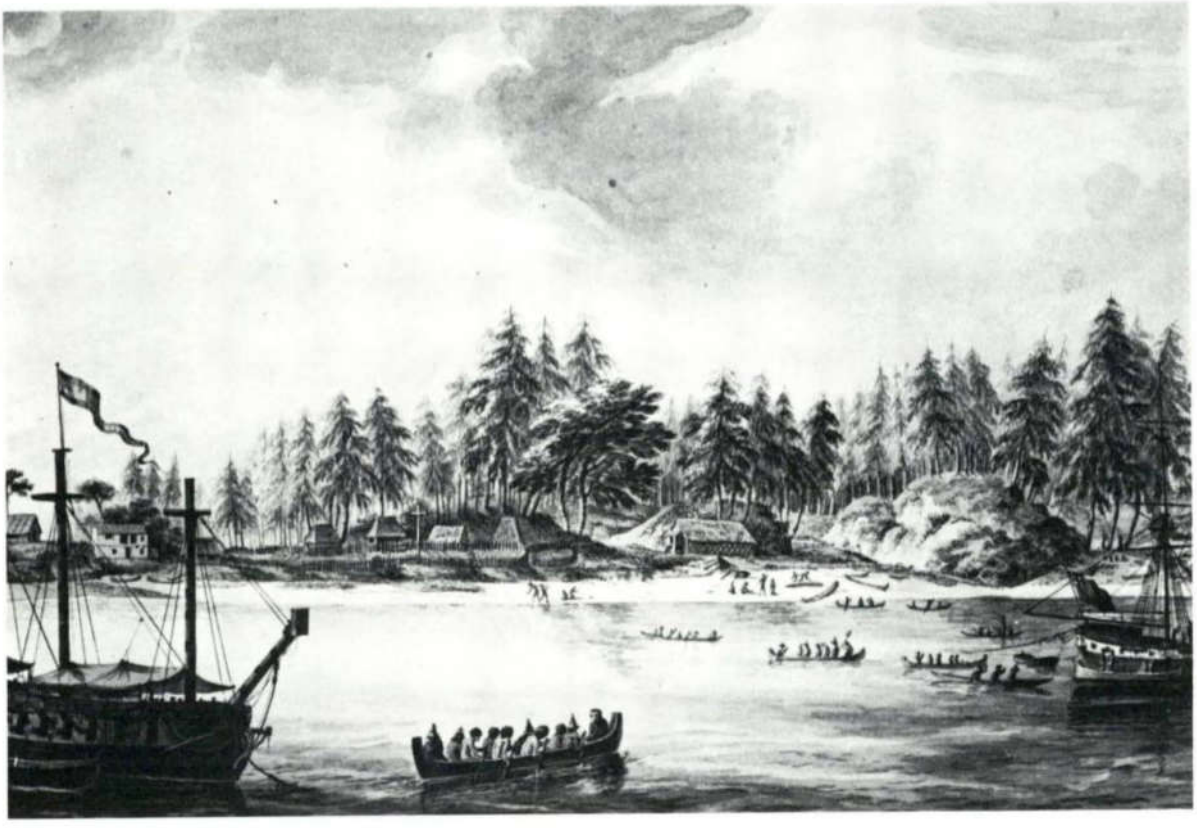
The Malaspina Gallery on Gabriola Island near Vancouver, B.C., as drawn by an artist of the expedition, and below, as it is today.



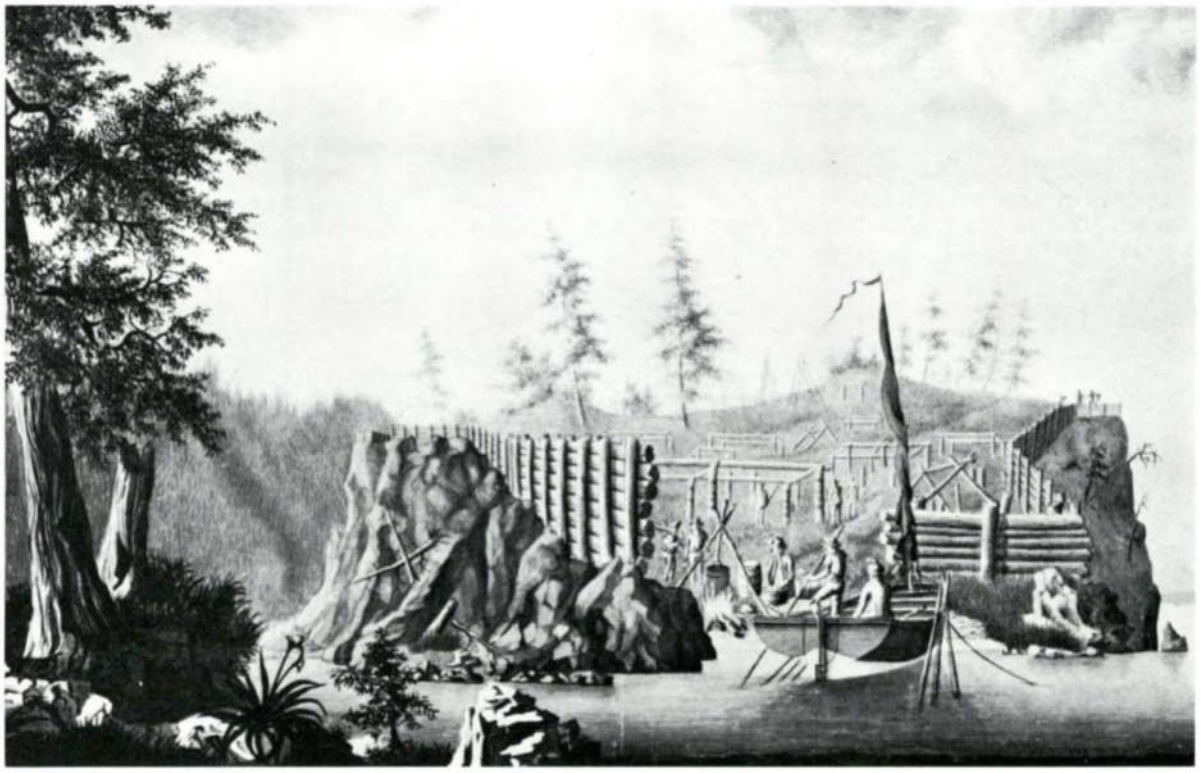
while a boat party explored the inner reaches of the ice-strewn bay. A month later he put in for two weeks at Nootka, then a supply station under Spanish control. But before setting out on the long Pacific voyage which was to take him from Mexico to the Philippines, China and the South Sea Islands, he arranged for a subsidiary expedition to make a more complete survey of the whole Vancouver Island region. Accordingly, the schooners *Sutil* and *Mexicana*, commanded by two of his most trusted officers, Dionisio Galiano and Cayetano Valdés, arrived at Nootka in May, 1792, and spent four months circumnavigating and mapping Vancouver Island (where place-names given by, or associated with, the expedition still abound). All in all, the records and drawings made by the scientists and artists of Malaspina's ships constitute an invaluable source of eyewitness information about the Indian history of the Pacific Coast.

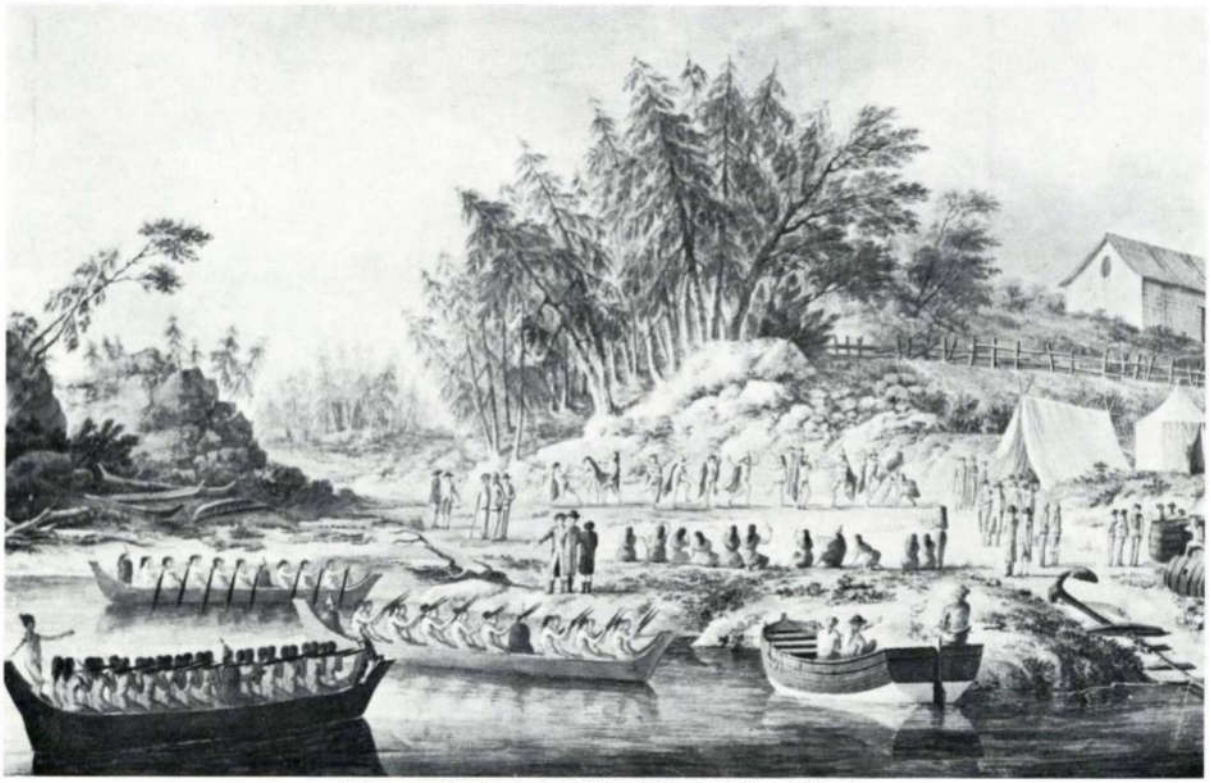
Malaspina returned to Spain in 1794 with an enormous mass of material, including seventy cases of artifacts for the royal museum and a botanical collection of more than 14,000 plants, gathered by the Austrian botanist Thaddaeus Haenke and the Frenchman, Louis Née. He had accomplished precisely what he had set out to do: 'ours was not a voyage of discovery; our object was scientific knowledge of America. . .' He had also

The wife of Natsapi, a Nootka chief, and below, a view of the port and settlement at Nootka.



Tetaku, Chief of the Nootka, and one of his wives.
Below, an Indian fortification on Juan de Fuca Strait.





MUSEO NAVAL, MADRID

A dance on the shore, part of the Indian festivities at Nootka.

acquired some curiously free-thinking notions which promptly landed him in trouble with the Spanish court. His outspoken criticism of the monarchy and of its colonial policy led to his being arrested and imprisoned without a trial in the castle of San Antonio in La Coruña. It was eight years before his Italian friends, invoking Napoleon's influence, succeeded in getting him released, on condition that he never set foot in Spain again. His health broken, he returned to Italy, where he died at his birthplace on 9 April 1810, aged 55. Meanwhile, a deliberate effort was made to expunge his name from the official records, and to deny him the credit for his accomplishments. The maps published as a result of his voyages mention the *Descubierta* and the *Atrevida* but omit the name of their commander. Official accounts of the *Sutil* explorations also suppressed Malaspina's part in the enterprise. The expedition papers were scattered among a dozen public and private collections, and the bulk of his journal was not published until 1885, when Spain had lost her American possessions and her interest in the Northwest coast.

It is hardly surprising, then, that some of the most important drawings by Malaspina's artists were rediscovered only recently among papers belonging to the descendants of one of the expedition's hydrographers. These are now in the Museo de America, Madrid, with whose kind permission several are reproduced here for the first time. They furnish a fascinating glimpse of what life was like in the pre-colonial epoch of the Northwest Indians, at least as it appeared to European eyes. The same strong, Tartar-like faces portrayed by these eighteenth-century Spanish artists can still be seen among the Northwest Indians – a far from vanishing race whose numbers are steadily increasing. Many of the landscapes are also unchanged, for although there are several modern port cities in the region, most of the coast is still as empty as when Cook and Malaspina first set eyes on it. Only the totem poles, the 'monstrous decorations', have virtually disappeared, along with the way of life and art that made them possible.

This selection of drawings is accompanied by representative pages from Malaspina's account of his visit to Yakutat Bay, Alaska, a document which has never before been published in English. Oddly enough, considering the importance of Malaspina's findings, many of the papers connected with the expedition remain to be identified, catalogued and published: some of them repose in Russian archives, and some are still locked away in an inaccessible private American collection. Not until all of them have finally come to light will we know the full extent of the debt which posterity owes to the memory of Alessandro Malaspina.

THE VISIT TO YAKUTAT BAY

Translation and selection of excerpts from the Malaspina account by Frederic V. Grunfeld and Toby Molenaar

June 27, 1791. Thanks to the account by Captain Dixon [who reached Yakutat Bay on a trade mission for the King George's Sound Company in 1787] we were not unaware that these islands were inhabited by a small number of people; by ten o'clock two big canoes and one small one had already confirmed this. They sallied from a channel at a short distance from each other and appeared to be heading for the *Atrevida*, which followed in our wake: at a great distance they intoned their harmonious hymn of peace, accompanied by the unmistakable gesture of open arms to show that they had come unarmed and were only anxious to receive assurances of peace and friendship from our side.

Since we had just decided to veer and steer towards the anchorage, the two big canoes soon approached the corvettes and finally drew alongside, not without first showing signs of fear and following with every move the orders and instructions of a venerable old man who paddled from one side to the other in the small canoe and gave every indication of being the leader of the little tribe.

Detail from the scene above by one of the expedition's artists.

After both sides had made the first, rather ambiguous displays of their social instincts – each gesture or expression being interpreted rather by imagination than reason – our efforts naturally were directed towards encouraging them to come aboard, and we regaled them with biscuits, bacon and tallow. Since we complied with their request that as many of us should descend as hostages as would come aboard from their side, it did not take long to convince them of our peaceful intentions; and as we did not neglect to give some trifling presents to those who came first, within half an hour we no longer needed hostages, nor was it in the least necessary for us to urge them, since almost all of them showed a great desire to slip below decks, no doubt with the idea of stealing any trifle that might come to hand.

They remained on board until after midday. In all their actions they displayed a cheerful, lively nature, and as our marines and sailors were not long in giving them some of their rations and articles of clothing, it needed considerable urging to make them leave and move their canoe from alongside; it might have run some risk from the seasonably fresh east-north-east wind and the rather long tacks we repeatedly had to make. . . .

From the moment we cleared the point and entered the shelter of the harbour, many canoes came to meet us, at times repeating the hymn of peace, and sometimes raising a general harmonious clamour which sounded like an invitation or an expression of admiration. They offered to trade salmon and wooden artifacts rather than otter skins, to which they tried to attach a high value. Very silently, and perhaps not without fear, they watched our labour of lowering the small boats, parti-

cularly the launch. Finally, since it was nine o'clock in the evening, and both corvettes had put out a stream-anchor to the north as a second mooring, we parted amid mutual signs of friendship in order to get some rest.

June 28. Our position in Port Mulgrave and the beauty of our surroundings are better conveyed by the drawings accompanying this account than by any description, however minute and studied: despite the cloudy, rainy weather, everything indicated a mild climate. The port could almost be called a repair basin; the natives were close by and in sufficient numbers to enable us to study them without difficulty and without disturbing their customs; and the water, wood, ballast, fish and vegetables, all things we needed, were so close at hand that it could hardly be called trouble to bring them aboard.

At daybreak the natives had already come aboard the corvettes in considerable numbers. They began offering some skins, many fresh salmon or some wooden utensils in exchange for clothing or iron, the only things they seemed genuinely interested in, though they did accept all kinds of buttons, nails and any of the many items that go under the heading of hardware.

They managed to become more friendly with the crews, and since it is in the nature of sailors to be ruled more by caprice than by economic considerations (to an extent which others may find difficult to understand), the natives soon discovered, during their first exchanges, that this kind of trade was extremely profitable for them. To judge by the relative anxiety of the two parties one would have supposed that it was our sailors who could not live without acquiring everything in sight, rather than a case of the natives needing the cloth and iron they had such good reasons to want.

The tricks the natives use when bartering and bargaining have been well described by Captain Dixon. Not only do they conceal the things they intend to exchange, but never do they manifest more indifference than on such occasions. After a period of sometimes more than an hour, during which they remain unmoved by the sight of the many objects that are being offered to them, they will finally produce a pelt, a doll, a spoon or some other trifle and try to exchange it for everything in sight. They will point to its size or symmetry if they cannot praise its quality; having once struck a bargain they will go back on it; and finally, if among the things they have brought with them there is one really fine skin, they will display it with such an air of mystery, then quickly put it away, and thereupon bring it out again, that they excite in even the most indifferent person a mixture of irritation and desire which is hard to hide behind a disinterested expression.

They do not display the least rivalry among themselves in either buying or selling; on the contrary, in an admirable unanimity of interest they either consult with each other to approve the exchange, or if the bargain has been struck, they applaud it with one, two or three unanimous shouts, depending on whether they consider it more or less advantageous. . . .

The old chief, who had been regaled aboard the *Atrevida* the previous morning, had now come over to the *Descubierta* at the urging of the Commandant, with whom he seemed to have established an enduring friendship, and very soon we succeeded in having Tomás de Suría draw his portrait with great accuracy. He left one of his sons in charge of the bartering, in which he preferred clothing to anything else. Finally he engaged us in a protracted conversation whose subject (as far as we could understand) was a description of some skirmishes he had recently had with his neighbours. His appearance was formidable, owing to his age, his bearing and the vigour that expressed itself in all his actions. He described each stage of the skirmish in the most vivid colours, and we understood that his enemies had carried up to six muskets, that there were some casualties on both sides, and that they had sued for peace, which was soon granted. But what caused us the greatest confusion, in view of the perfect intelligence of his narrative, was his intimation that one of the enemy was on horseback: so great was his desire to make us understand this that he called his son and made him go down on all fours, to show us how the enemy was mounted. By this time his portrait was finished, which was very much to his liking; not only did he ask us also to draw the head-dress of the vanquished enemy chief (which he showed us – it had three hoops of thin copper sheeting), but he insisted that we should specifically set down that it was the fruit and symbol of his victory. At last, the afternoon being well advanced and every flattery having been employed on our part in order to strengthen and confirm his confidence and friendship, the chief departed, leaving us to eat in peace. . . .

June 30. Our relations with the natives at this time could hardly have been friendlier: we had familiarized ourselves with the most essential words of their language; we visited their huts freely; Tomás de Suría was able to make some portraits of the women and sketches of their rather small number of domestic utensils; trading had picked up considerably on both sides, and they had already given us permission to provide ourselves with wood from the vicinity of their huts without any sort of contract, though we would not have hesitated to give them one immediately.

In the area where our observatory tent was located the natives had buried the body of a man killed during the latest quarrels; the grave was marked by a small pole planted among the weeds and covered with a mat of woven rushes held down by stones. The natives were quite reluctant to approach this place and insisted that we should also keep away, accompanying their instructions with the silence and gestures that indicate a fear of interrupting a peaceful sleep.

Among the many things they brought to market at that time were abundant traces of Captain Dixon's visit to this port with the brigantine *Queen Charlotte;* we saw some axes and cooking pots, a silver spoon, two or three books and some articles of clothing. Often the younger men repeated the sea-chantey for shipboard work and some English word or other; as for the pieces of iron, we had reason to believe that with the aid of fire and stones they were soon converted into the daggers and knives which each of them carried under his left arm, hidden by skins of wolf, otter or bear. A no less evident trace of the same visit was their persistence in offering us the use of their women, which made it necessary for us to remonstrate with the old chief for bringing a woman to the observatory tent while we were staying there, and to repeat the orders that no one but the officers of the corvettes was to approach the huts. Their cajoleries to this end increased, and around six o'clock in the afternoon we saw, near the poop of the *Descubierta,* a canoe with three women, two of whom were no more than eighteen or twenty years of age. They repeated some English words, exhibited their customary loquaciousness for a long time, and finally intoned a quite melodious chant, which Thaddaeus Haenke noted down with his usual exactitude and musical skill.

At the close of the evening, the weather having cleared up completely, the spectacle presented to our view was both new and magnificent. Like a theatre curtain that suddenly rises to disclose a variety of new and beautiful objects to the admiring spectator, the clouds and fog that had hitherto shrouded distant objects were suddenly dispersed and the whole majestic mountain range, which runs from Mount Fairweather to Mount Saint Elias, became visible. The ice which covered them from the summit down to the lowest slopes reflected the rays of the sun with radiant brilliance: spread out below them for several leagues one saw a pine forest, luxurious and leafy beyond description. Finally the extremely pure atmosphere, with a light breeze from the Northwest, lengthened the day with the beautiful light of dusk; not even at midnight were we deprived of this beautiful and majestic sight. . . .

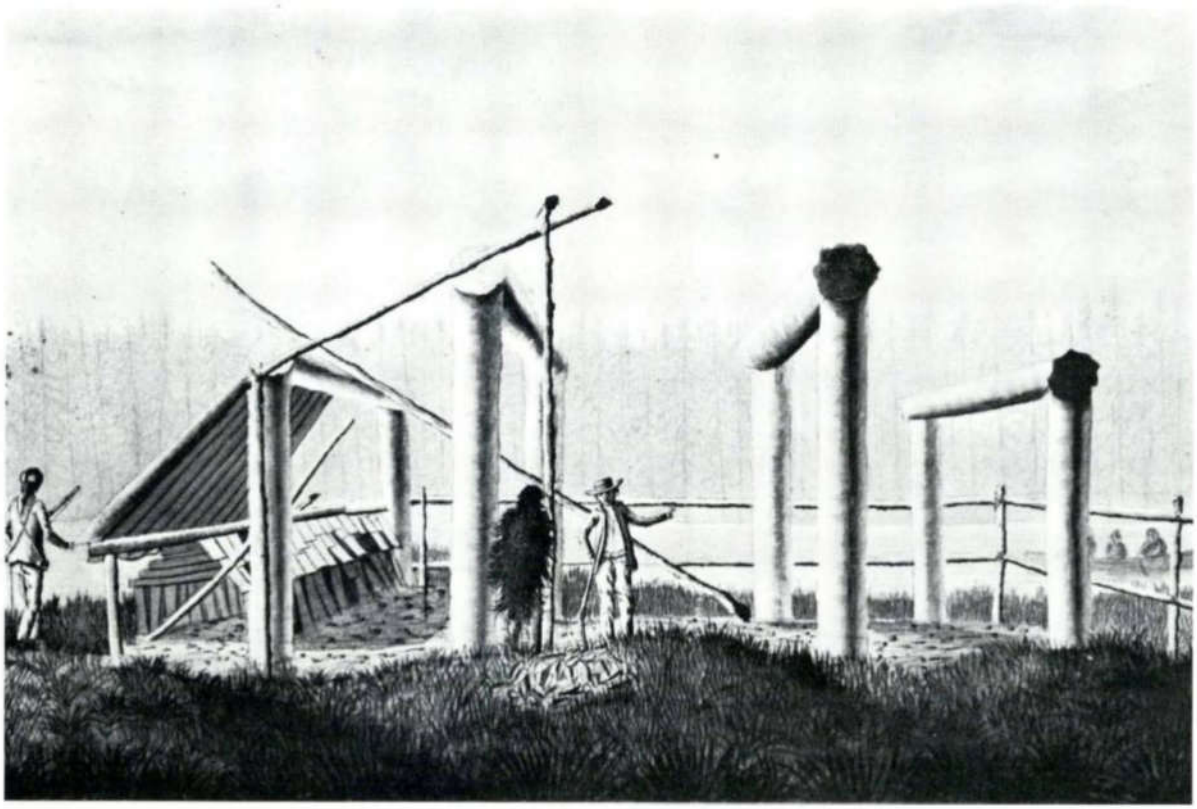
June 30. While we were attending to the preparations for [our geodesic] operations at about six o'clock in the morning, and only a few natives had as yet approached the observatory tent, we suddenly saw the old *Ankau* (the word with which they designate their chief) coming towards us, accompanied by another person whose preëminence among the others was very great, although we were never able to discover what were his rights and functions in the tribe. Both seemed very anxious and displayed signs of great fear as they announced the approach of two canoes they had just sighted, and of whose intentions, whether peaceful or hostile, they were yet uncertain. Anxiously (for the two canoes had already come within one or two miles of the port) they urged us to go to the opposite shore and fire a volley so as to oblige the intruders to show their intentions. In the meantime they ordered the whole tribe to arm themselves: the women withdrew, and two big canoes upturned on the beach were launched. Naturally we decided to oblige them; crossing to the opposite shore, we fired a musket from a place easily seen by the people in the canoes. At this signal, all the people aboard, about forty in all, immediately burst into the hymn of peace, continuing the song as they approached and finally reached the shore — though not without new fears and precautions on the part of our *Ankau,* who never ceased shouting to them that they should watch their step, since we were his allies.

With virtually all their fears dispelled, though still armed, the inhabitants of the bay approached the canoes and took the leaders into their arms to carry them to the beach so that they would not have to get wet. They were immediately presented to us by our *Ankau.* General peace-making followed this ceremony; soon afterwards some of them, embracing, rejoicing and talking, were taken to the huts. Except for the area where they were drying their skins and preparing their food, they seemed much more like members of the same tribe than men who had been ready to kill each other only an hour before. . . .

The newcomers had, of course, brought some good sea-otter skins, and in the afternoon these began to appear at a market they held in their canoes, near the gangway of the corvettes. Since they had already joined their interests with those of the old tribe, however, and were always accompanied by one of them, their demands not only failed to diminish with the competition, but little by little reached such heights, particularly where clothing was concerned, that one or two sailors lost considerably in the exchange, even in comparison with the value of the skins on the Canton market.

It was, indeed, an extraordinary spectacle to see a good half of the old tribe and part of the new one so oddly dressed in old military uniforms, sailors' jackets, hats, scarves, shirts, trousers, etc., indiscriminately mixing winter and summer issue. No doubt they would have caused great excitement on any ship they might board, where it would probably be suspected that the crew of a Spanish ship had been massacred in the vicinity.

According to [the expedition's hydrographer] Felipe Bauzá, the stretch of coast between the watering-place and Point Muñoz was covered by lush vegetation and the nearby fields were so full of a kind of wild strawberry that his entire company, including some five sailors, had been unable to eat them all. He had also followed the river upstream and visited — not without a great deal of admiration — the burial ground already mentioned by Captain Dixon. The circumstances of all that surrounded the place were so interesting and capable of shedding so



Beams and poles of a winter house at Port Mulgrave (Yakutat Bay).

much light on the religious principles of these people that we would have been guilty of a serious oversight had we not visited them.

July 1. The following morning, therefore, Tomás de Suría, José Espinosa and other officers went directly to the river by boat, and shortly after nine arrived at the spot. Fortunately there were four or five natives picking strawberries in a nearby field; they seemed to belong to the poorest sort of people and were little apt to satisfy our curiosity, but since the main purpose of the excursion was to collect some item or other for the Royal Museum, their company was more opportune to the occasion than that of the people from the anchorage who, out of fear or reverence, might not have allowed us to carry out our plans. Our party first measured, and Tomás de Suría drew a perspective view of the beams and poles which enclosed a large room that was evidently intended for winter use.

They were occupied for a long time with the objects in the old sepulchre, and afterwards with the newer one, whose situation, ornamentation and excellent state of preservation compelled respect and admiration. Finally, they gave the natives some presents to prevent antagonizing them, took out one of the boxes in the old sepulchre, and carried it on board. On the outside it was lightly decorated with the usual convoluted patterns; inside was another, smaller box in which a sort of basket was found, as well as a few calcinated and largely pulverized bones. The drawing of these sepulchres which accompanies this account will give a far better idea of the different objects and their proportions than any description, which by itself would be only difficult and tedious. Here we shall merely add that the natives gave them to understand that the graves were exclusively those of the *Ankaus*, or ruling family, and there was no doubt that the bodies surrounding the huge figure had been cremated. In addition to what they could learn from the signs made by the natives, they noted three or four small pits, the size of a man, in which the charcoal or wood that had been used for the pyre was covered over with some boards and stones. . . .

July 5. As we hoisted our sails almost all the canoes withdrew and only one remained near the *Descubierta:* in it was a woman who seemed determined . . . to prove that not even this harsh climate could destroy that gentle and endearing character which has always been the distinguishing feature of her sex. Our surgeon, noticing that the woman had a very young infant with her, threw down to her some small bells and coins, indicating that she could use them as ornaments. He then climbed to the quarterdeck, and when he came to

the sally-port her canoe was already alongside. Compassion moved him to make her another present of the same kind and the woman could hardly restrain her gratitude: quickly she cut in half a skin she was wearing and offered it to him, first touching the head of the child as if to show that she did it in his name. Such an action demanded grateful acknowledgement on our part, and everyone who happened to be present did not fail to give her some trifle they happened to have at hand: but the woman, far from permitting her poverty or her love of adornment to dictate her actions, preferred to compete with us in generosity, giving as much as she received, sometimes in her child's name, and thus she continued with the same eager determination until she was completely despoiled of all the skins that had covered her. It may well be imagined that in the end the victory in this contest was ours, though this in no way diminished the admiration we felt for her conduct. . . .

General Observations

It will not be difficult to calculate the approximate number of inhabitants from Prince William Sound to the slopes of Mt. de la Cruz: 600 in the Sound, as many more on the slopes of Mt. Saint Elias, 400 in Port Mulgrave and another 600 between Bering Bay and Cross Sound, giving a total of 2,200 souls to be counted along this lengthy stretch of coast. . . .

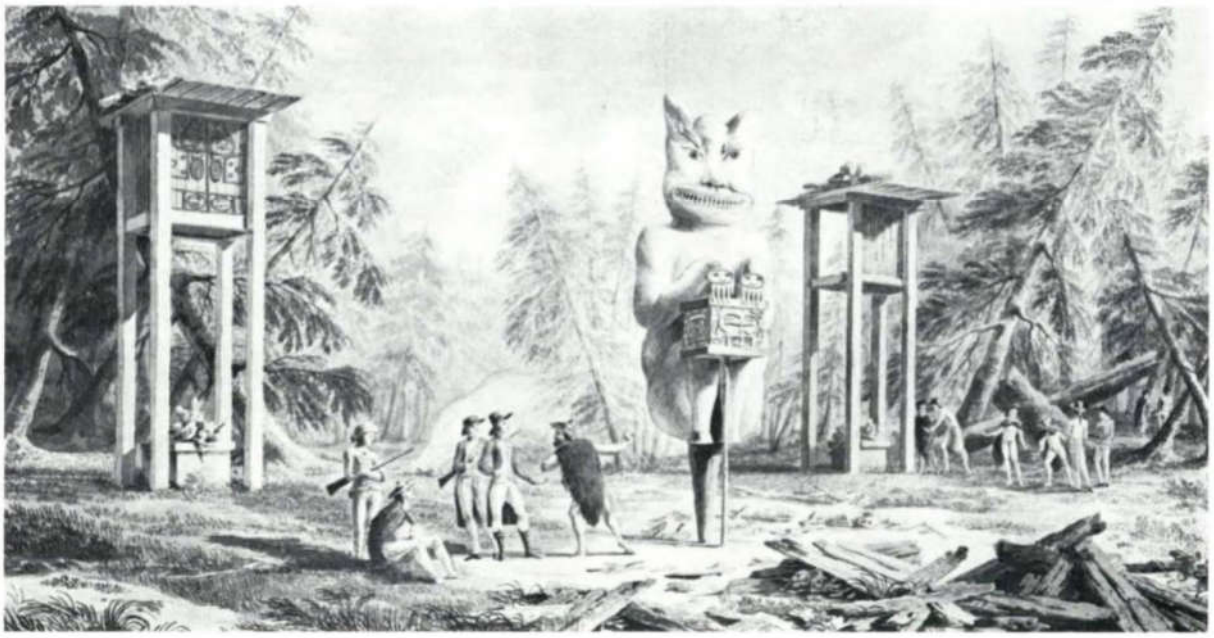
There is no doubt that among these small tribes there is one family in which is vested the succession to the chieftainship, and which furnishes the chief who governs them in peacetime and leads them in war. The *Ankau* Juné was, in our opinion, fully worthy of this public confidence, uniting all the qualities of age, valour, physique and intelligence which should be decisive in the election of a chief of even a small group in a nascent stage of social development. His father, at the head of the tribe, had not long before repulsed an enemy invasion, purchasing victory at the cost of his life.

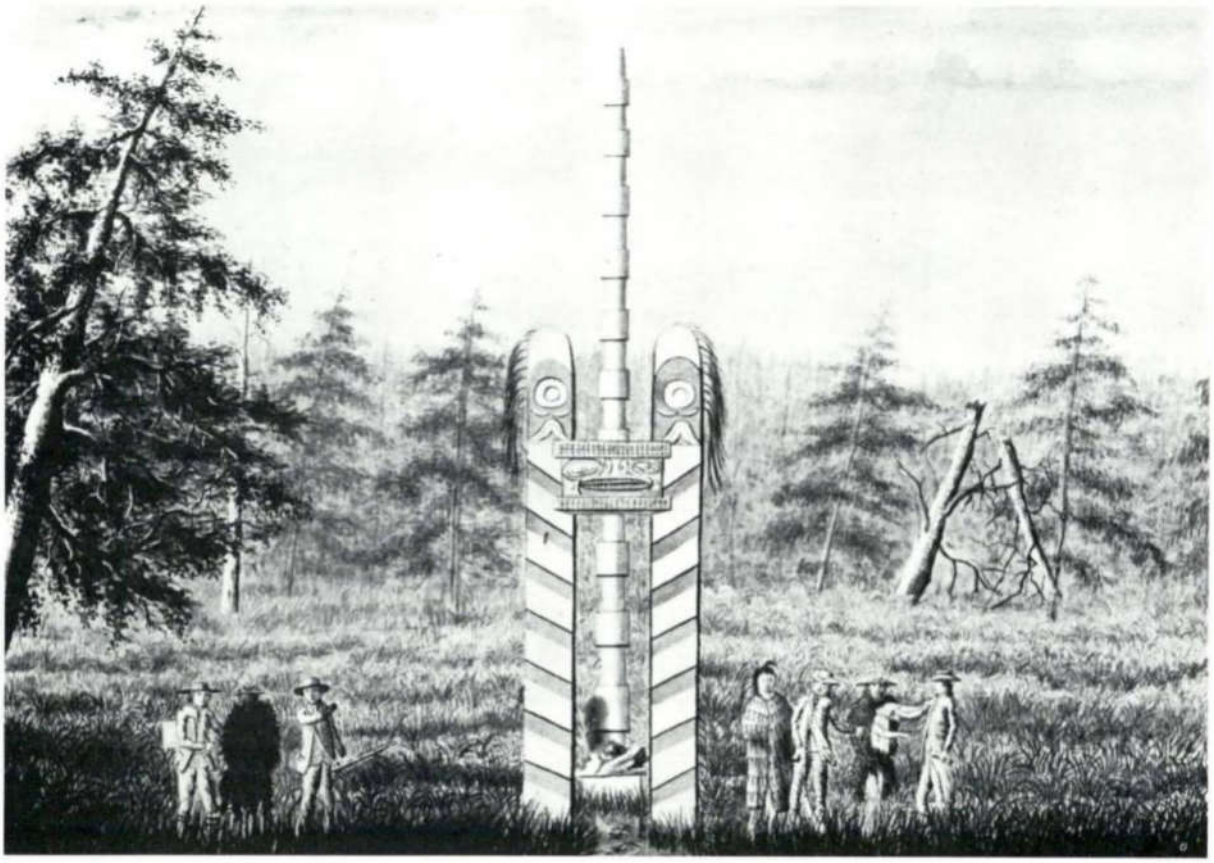
His son told us of some of his own exploits during that same battle: his audacious appearance, his prowess in bear hunting and his present experience in governing a hamlet in Disenchantment Bay all indicate that his position of supreme authority will be safe when it passes into his hands. Among the many positive proofs which dissipated all doubts as to the succession being hereditary in the family of the *Ankau* and the distinctions it merits, the family's burial ground attracted our particular attention: we examined it thoroughly and its peculiarities have been reproduced with great accuracy by the artist José Cardero. We were never able to learn if the huge monster represented an idol or if it was just a fearful reminder of the devastation of death, but we were inclined to believe the former, in view of the various pyres located in the vicinity, on which several bodies had been cremated. In a small box which lay beneath its claws or hands was a small empty basket, the crown of a European hat, a wolf's skin and piece of board. The height of the monster was not less than ten and a half French feet: the whole was of pine wood, and the ornaments of the box were seashells embedded in the wood: its paint was red ochre, with the exception of the teeth, nails and upper part of the head, which were painted in black and white. . . .

The monster faced toward the east: its name, according to some natives who accompanied us, was Iukitchetch. The monuments at the sides belonged to two sons of the present *Ankau*, as he himself informed us upon our return from this excursion. Another burial place, about two musket shots away from those just described, was even more remarkable; although its purpose was the same, to shelter a small box inside and hold another high above the ground, its paintings and decorations were of even higher quality, with hair hanging from the two poles holding the box and from a high posterior point, probably to remind the passer-by of the person whose ashes were deposited here. Everything lent a marvelous feeling to this place, the beauty of which was enhanced by its delightful surroundings. Some officers of the *Descubierta* who visited this burial place with the *Ankau* himself were able to ascertain that it was the sepulchre of one of his wives. Antonio Tova, on the other hand, found a similar group of monuments on Pineda Island, facing in the same direction and adorned with the same monsters, which finally led us to believe that each family or line of descent builds its own monument which, being made of wood and afterwards neglected, in a few years falls victim to weather and the elements. . . .

After all the observations we have related, it will not appear presumptuous on our part to state that these natives have certain religious principles which refer specifically to an afterlife; that they tolerate polygamy but obey the harmonious laws of nature relative to paternal care, as well as conjugal and filial love; that they are sufficiently industrious and very skilful; that traces of an oriental solemnity are to be seen in their customs; that they are brave, or rather ferocious to a degree that is proper in a people who are usually good-hearted, but with no sense of their own weakness; and last, that being bound to their tribe by close ties of loyalty, they rarely disturb the internal peace of the community or do harm to each other, all the less because the concepts of property, class distinctions and a leisure class have not yet put down their frightful roots among them. Their language and music correspond well with these qualities; to their truly harmonious hymns of peace, war, rejoicing and devotion they usually add those of their funeral ceremonies, which doubtless correspond to the monuments with which they try to perpetuate their memory. In the language which the chiefs used to convince the tribe to do what they wanted, we clearly observed not only harmony and oratorical fluency accompanied by extremely expressive gestures, but also the ease with which they adapted themselves to new ideas acquired from contact with Europeans. ◆

The pyre and sepulchre of the ruling family at Port Mulgrave and below, the burial place of one of the wives of the Ankau Junè.





STORY TIME AT

Tautunngi, the story teller, with part of her audience of children.

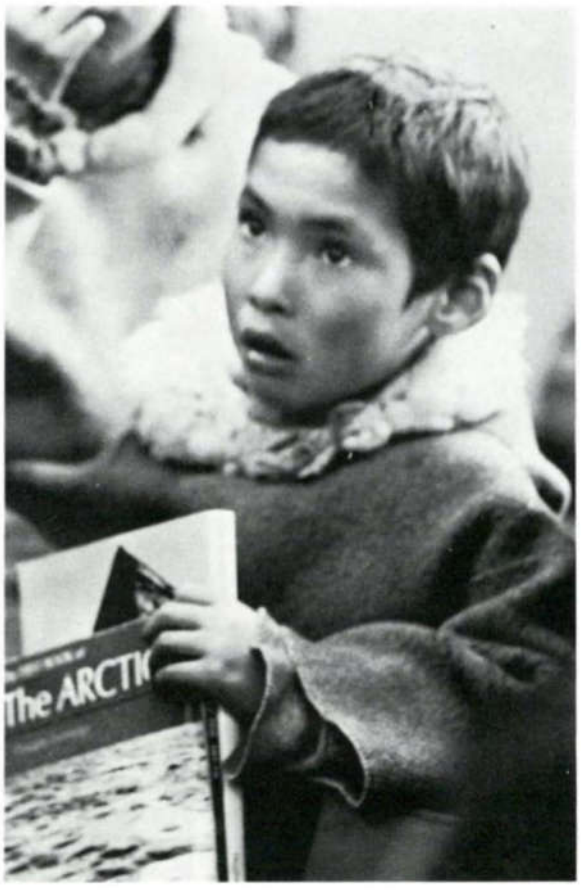
'Taipsumanguuq quasuqsinialirmat tiriganiakuluqu amarurjuarlu . . . amarualuqlu (Once upon a time in the spring, a wee little fox and a great big wolf . . .)

Those who have just come in, hurriedly hang their coats on the hooks by the door and scurry to join the attentive semi-circle of children gathered round the woman at the end of the room.

'Tiriqaniakuluuq qaiggalatuk . . . (The wee little fox shouted out . . .) The stragglers settle into the charmed circle, hardly noticed by those already there. It is children's story time at the library.

At Rankin Inlet, the tradition of oral Eskimo literature is kept alive by Tautunngi, a very active grandmother. Since the fall of 1971 Tautunngi has been conducting a story hour every Monday night in the John Ayaruaq Library, which is named in memory of the story teller John Ayaruaq, whose tales of his early life are recorded in his autobiography.

The library is open on Monday and Wednesday evenings and on Friday and Sunday afternoons. On a winter evening it is not unusual for the library staff to



Photographs and text by LORNE SMITH

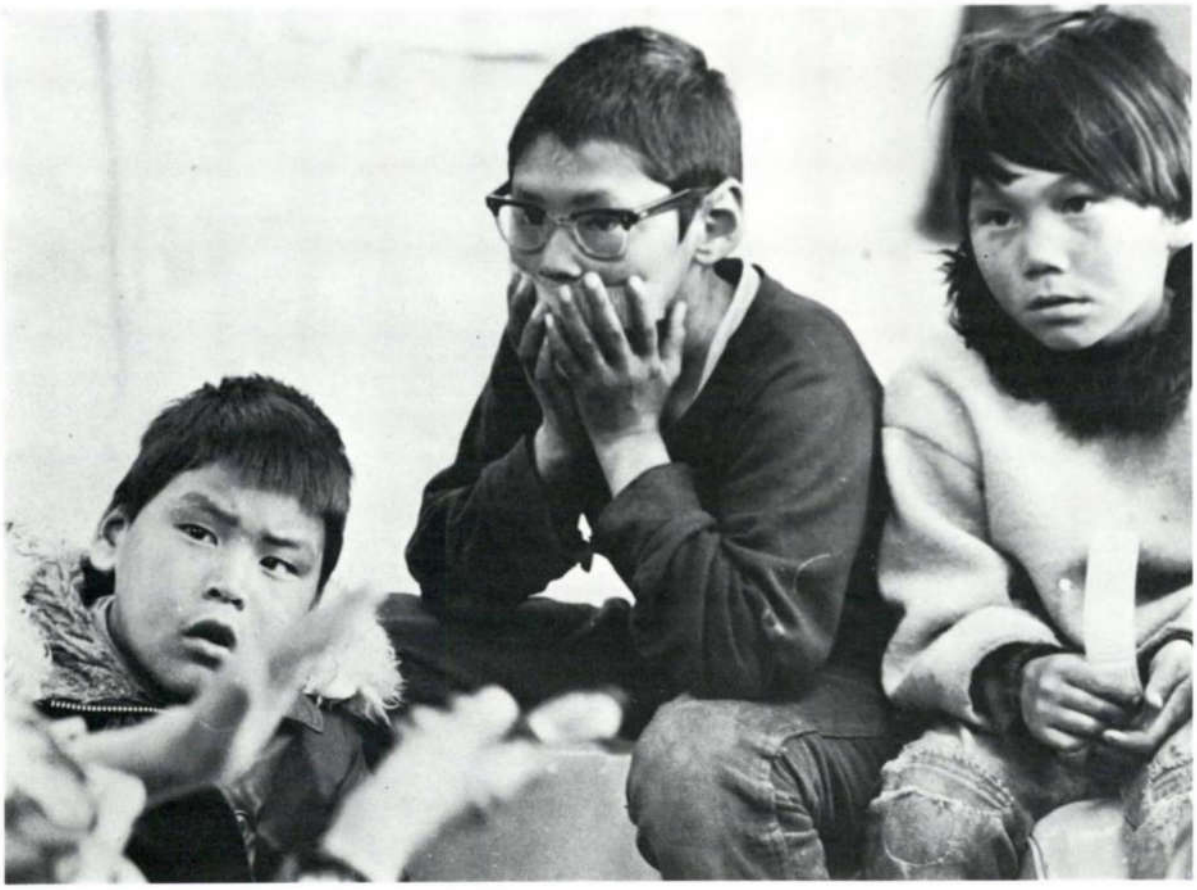
An anthropologist with seven years of Arctic teaching experience, Lorne Smith is now preparing a curriculum for teaching the Eskimo language in Keewatin schools.

RANKIN INLET

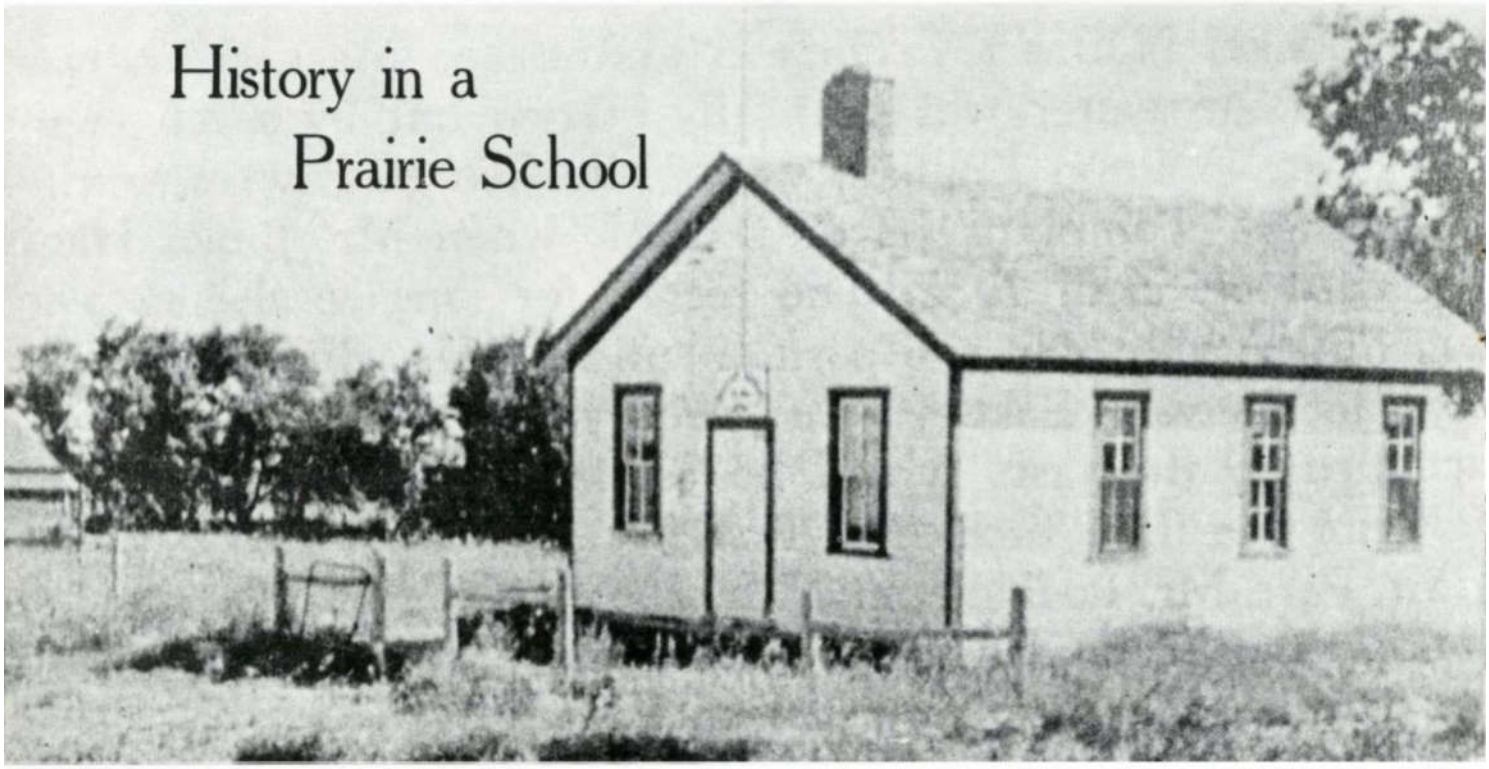
check out 60 to 70 books. The few books that are available in syllabics are the most popular, but children's story books and magazines are carefully read also. The library serves the region as well as the community and books are sent out to other settlements on loan. When funds become available it is hoped that audio-visual equipment will be purchased so that Tautunngi's stories can be taped and circulated in other settlements in the region.

On Monday nights the children are often lined up, waiting for the library to open and the story hour to begin.

Tautunngi was born near Repulse Bay about 1914. With Kabluitok, her husband, she lived in the Wager Bay and Chesterfield Inlet areas, finally moving to Rankin Inlet soon after the nickel mine opened. Her stories are the traditional legends and true stories of her own and other people's experiences. But the special magic which she puts into her story telling is all her own. With words, facial expressions and action she keeps her young audience's attention to the very end. They are reluctant to leave when the hour has ended. ◆



History in a Prairie School



The Bertha School.

After this article was written, Professor J. Stuart Prentice, the author, died on July 26, 1972 at the age of eighty-three. Dr Prentice grew up in western Manitoba and taught economics at Queen's University, the University of Chicago and many years at Middlebury College, Vermont.

WELL DO I REMEMBER THAT DAY – January 22, 1901. I was one of the bigger and more advanced students. I was therefore sitting at one of the larger desks for boys, on the northern side, and towards the back of the room in the Bertha school on the silent Manitoba prairie. It seemed an ordinary winter day, but before it ended I felt myself, as never before, living an historical event.

The school had been built on a slight rise. From it you could look across the level prairie and see clearly the two grain elevators in Nesbitt, six miles away, and beyond that the Brandon Hills, perhaps another four miles or so distant on our northern horizon. Near their eastern slope lay the village of Methven, with its two elevators clearly visible on most days; and to our northeast the Lone Star elevator at Elliotts, eleven miles from the school. Scattered about this table-flat landscape lay homes half a mile or more apart, a score of them easily identifiable under the azure sky of summer, and all even more sharply limned when the temperature fell below zero in winter. Then the air shimmered, and the grain elevators seemed to tower to three or four times their normal height, as they shivered and trembled in the fractured atmosphere. Then, too, the whistle of the afternoon passenger train could be clearly heard as it approached Nesbitt, six miles away; and we boys would vie with each other in our efforts to count the cars on it.

To the east of the school we could clearly see the Tiger Hills that lay beyond the great gorge that was the valley of the Souris River. About four miles to the south of the school lay what we termed the Elbow in the river. Geologists now surmise that 10,000 years ago the river continued to flow from that point in a south-easterly direction down the wide and fertile Lang's Valley; but that one year, at the close of that ice age, Lang's Valley became choked with ice and debris, and that then the mighty ice-age river crashed through what we termed the Tiger Hills, creating a gorge about a mile wide and up to one hundred feet deep. It was a gorge that effectively separated the Bertha District from what we knew as the Tiger Hills, and from the home of a man named Patterson. I never saw him, but I remember his personality vividly because he was one of the few bee-keepers in Manitoba in that age when wheat was

king. It must have been his bees that stung me while I was picking raspberries in our garden. During the berry-picking season, I spent long hours there and can still recall the stings. On many a day I wished that his garden, and not ours, had been extra large. But there were eight children in our family, and we needed the two hundred and more quarts of fruit that Mother preserved each summer.

The first white men to explore this area were the French Canadians, Sieur de la Vérendrye and his sons. They came to the Red River Basin: Jean-Baptiste in 1734 to build Fort Maurepas, and his father in 1737 and again in 1738. As he was in search of a route to the Pacific Ocean, he continued westward. It is said by some authorities that when he reached the Souris he found that stream so unpredictably and unbelievably crooked, even within its mighty banks near us, that he named it the Souris Rivière – the Mouse River – and the Souris it remains to this day, save on some maps of North Dakota, where it is shown as the Mouse River.

To this gorge due east of the school there came a man of wealth by the name of Gregory, from Wingham, Ontario. He was a miller by profession, and here, at considerable cost, he erected and equipped his mill. It operated with great acceptability for some years, as the rutted trails to it so amply demonstrated. Then a spring freshet washed out the dam, and all was lost. But his silent mill and his fine house with its splendid lawn still remained when our family reached the district.

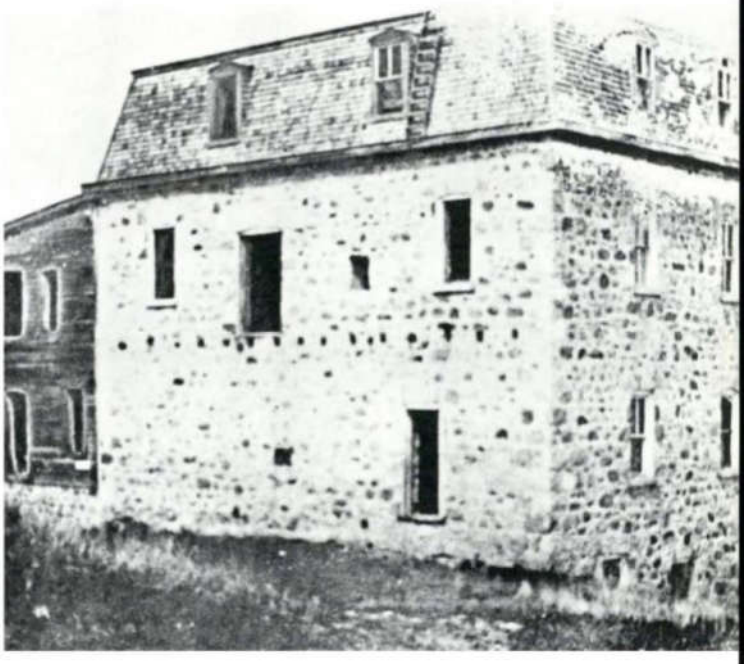
On that never-to-be-forgotten 22nd day of January, 1901, the Bertha District was still a young community in a young province. It was but nineteen years since the first train had reached Winnipeg from Ontario, and fifteen since the first had reached Nesbitt. Less than fifteen years before the date of this story, the whole area had been occupied by none but coyotes, badgers, and jack rabbits, save for an occasional Red River cart from the Hudson's Bay Company's fort in the Brandon Hills.

By 1901 the Hardwicks, the Whartons, and the Foxes had been lured from England. Every other person for miles around had come from Ontario. All were young and had much in common. The only two older persons that I knew lived in a little house behind Billy Miller's home. One day an agent of some sort came to Billy's door, and while he was there, Billy's mother chanced to appear. The agent was taken aback by the sight of grey hair. He congratulated her on her years, to which she retorted: 'Come and meet my Mother.' Her mother, Mrs. Argue, died a few years later at the age of 109. These were the only two elderly people that I then knew on the prairie. When I returned to Ontario in 1910, to study at Queen's University, I was astounded to see so much grey hair on the streets of Kingston.

Bertha District in 1901 was a young community and a friendly one. The school was a community building. No one thought it wrong that it should be used every week for worship services, alternately on Sundays by the Anglicans, and at first by the Methodists and later by the Presbyterians. Nor did anyone object when school taxes were voted to erect a stable by the school, though all knew that it would be used mainly on Sundays during the hour of worship.

It is no reflection on the piety of the people to say that nearly everyone came to church services or that in summer they were wont to come half an hour early. The men would gather outside to talk as none but lonely farmers could talk in those days before the telephone ended their isolation. George Fox was an Englishman with an Englishman's love of titles borne by homes. He would refer to Billy Tompkins' house on the hill just south of the school as High View Farm. The Condons' rather inferior land he termed Rocky Ledges. The Hudsons were four unmarried brothers and sisters – Jim, Charlie, Annie, and Curlie – and so he named their home Bachelors' Hall. Our farm, down by the river, he designated Herd Farm and Fred Fisher's land was styled Windy Acres – when Fred was absent. This was because, on Sundays, Fred would stand with feet wide apart, and thumbs thrust in the oxters of his vest over his ample chest, and boast in springtime of the amazing acreage that he had sown to wheat; and at harvest he would hope vainly for our forgetfulness, and would tell of the small acreage he planted and the record yield per acre. Jim Hudson had been so afflicted in childhood with a strange disease that he was quite bald at twenty years of age. He had been deprived of education but he was no one's fool. While Fred would be boasting, Jim would be

Gregory's mill.



mentally calculating the correct number of bushels per acre, from the figures that Fred had vaunted of in the spring. In the meantime, my father would place one foot on the hub of a buggy, flip up the shiny tin lid on his clay pipe with his little finger, tap out the ashes on the steel tire of the wheel, and tell of what he had been doing with his powerful, but strange team – Fan, a bay mare that weighed 1600 pounds, and Hector, a pure bred Holstein bull that weighted over a ton. It could and did pull threshing separators out of holes from which other teams failed to budge them.

The women were as prepared as the men for gossip. They would gather in the school to compare their children, and to share with each other the treatment of childhood's ailments, as their mothers had taught them, or as they had learnt from the dubious pages of the Farmers' Almanac. But one unfailing topic of interest was the latest articles in the *Western Home Monthly* of Winnipeg; and most particularly its matrimonial correspondence pages, from which not a few lonely Manitoba bachelors found a helpmate, including a man who lived but two miles north of the Bertha school. Such wives were popularly known as *Western Home Monthly* brides. All agreed that the Bertha couple had achieved an ideal and happy marriage for two lonely people. To us youngsters this match seemed to be much wiser and happier than the political matches that our teacher, Miss Marie Black, tried to explain as arranged by politicians for Mary, Queen of Scots, to the sickly Dauphin of France, and when he died, to her cousin Darnley.

Despite these pleasant preliminaries of gossip, we were a worshipful people. Out on the lonely prairie we might plant, but we deeply believed that it was God who gave the increase. The heavens bent over us with a nearness and a tenderness that we had not known in the towns and cities of the more humid and populated east. And in winter, when the thermometer fell far below zero, the stars multiplied in their visibility, and shone with a brilliance new to us; and God the Maker of it all seemed to be 'closer than hands or feet'. The Bible spoke to simple, trustful folk of One who had made the world in seven days, and Who punished a Jonah with a whale. Our preachers might differ in their form of worship and the depth and type of their sermons, but they were to us God's messengers, and we were eager to give attention to each. Thus, too, we children were ready for the story that Miss Black was to tell us on that great day.

On that 22nd day of January in 1901 we at Bertha were isolated to an extent that modern rural folk can scarcely appreciate. The nearest post office was in a corner of Watson's store in Neshitt, six miles away. Telephones, radios, and television were for the long future ahead of us; and because we went to town but once a week, or even less at harvest time and in the stormy months of winter, no one subscribed to more than a weekly newspaper. Thus it was, that in October, 1899, a year and a half before the never-to-be-forgotten day, my father and brothers were much too busy with threshing and fall plowing to go to town. My father gave me a nickel for candy, and enough more to buy some sugar for table use and to preserve wild cranberries that we had somehow found time to pick down by the river, and he bade me go to town on foot for the mail – six miles going and a longer six miles on the homeward

A stacking scene near Brandon, c. 1890.

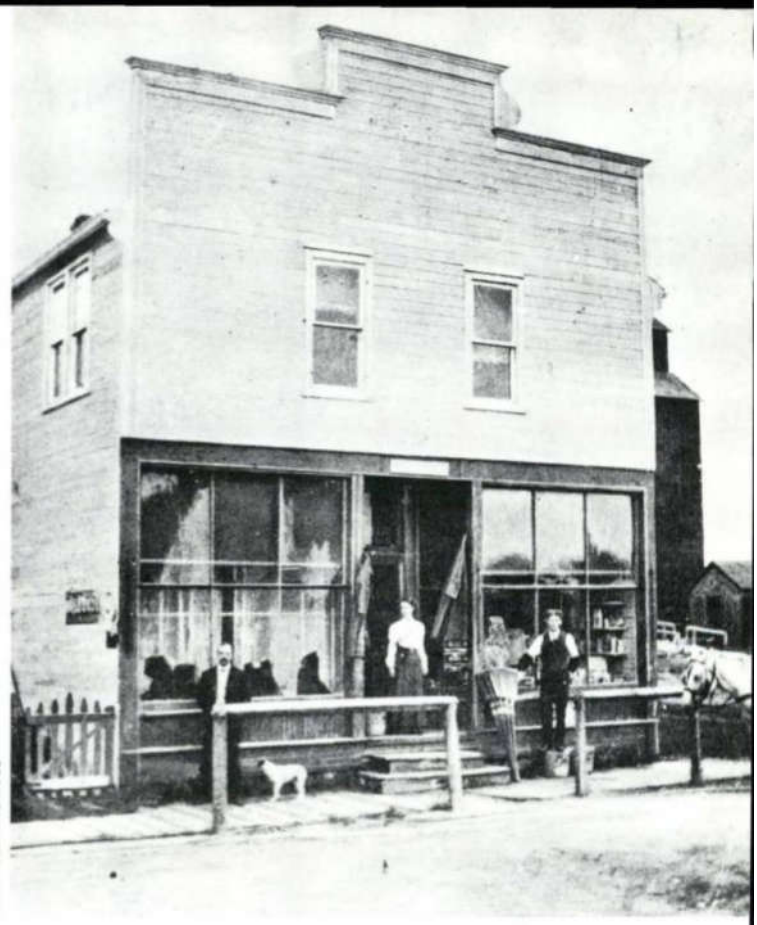
MANITOBA ARCHIVES

journey. In the mail that day was the latest issue of the *Family Herald and Weekly Star* of Montreal. The stop press news on the last page caught my eye at once. In bold print it announced that war had broken out in South Africa between Great Britain and the Boer Republics of the Transvaal and the Orange Free State, on 9 October. I remained in town only long enough to learn that Nesbitt's baseball pitcher, who lived on a farm just outside the village, was already on his way to enlist. That was enough for me. I all but ran home, in my boyish excitement forgetful of my aching feet. We were at war — indeed war had broken out six or seven days earlier, and because of the harvest, no one in the Bertha District knew of it.

We were indeed still isolated a year and a half later. It required half a day to go to town with a team of horses to get the mail and do the shopping. Our one source of hard money was wheat, which we hauled to the elevators in Nesbitt after frost had ended fall plowing, or to Elliotts, five miles farther away, if the elevator there was offering a cent more per bushel. With this money we farmers paid the thresher and liquidated bills for past purchases at Watson's or Brown's stores — for groceries, implements, binder twine, hardware, cloth that Mother converted into articles of clothing, and charcoal for the blacksmith shop. Like most farmers, my father sharpened his own axes, saws, and plow shares; shod his own horses; and reset the tires on the buggy and wagon. He also made the necessary repairs to harness and machinery on days too stormy or cold to haul grain to town or to go to the river for wood. He took a load of wheat to Wawanesa, fourteen miles away, to be ground into flour, and he gave a percentage of the wheat in payment for the service rendered. Our cows and hens provided all the milk, butter, and eggs needed for the table, and a surplus in summer, that Mother bartered for sugar, salt, and tea. Our cattle, pigs, and hens provided all the meat that we consumed. Our large garden produced our potatoes and other vegetables; and rhubarb, gooseberries, and black, red, and white currants; and an enormous patch of raspberries, not only to be devoured fresh, but to be preserved and put into over two hundred glass jars for our family of ten. Mother bought but a few quarts of plums and crabapples in summer, which she preserved for special occasions, as when the minister called, or when Mother and Father invited a neighbour family to come after church on Sunday. She made the bread, pies, and cakes that we ate. But despite all this, it was the wheat crop that yielded the cash to extinguish our debts, and to drop on the collection plate at church.

Yes! On that January day, 1901, we were a gregarious people, a friendly people who looked forward to all opportunities for gatherings, dances, concerts, and especially to the weekly meetings for worship together in the school which we took seriously, devotedly, and with a profound sense of the supernatural.

In all this Miss Black fitted perfectly into our Bertha community. She was small in stature, and slight, but she



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The Nesbitt general store and post office as it was in 1910.

was big in the invisible things that mattered. She was witty, and thoroughly efficient, and famous far and wide for her training of us for the annual pre-Christmas concert which included choruses, recitations, solos, and dramas. She played the organ that stood to the left of her desk, and we loved to sing *The Maple Leaf Forever* (*Oh Canada* had not yet been composed), and even more ardently *God Save The Queen*. We were as thoroughly British as she was, and proud of the red blotches all over the maps of the world.

On Sundays she always played the organ at our church services, and she did so with equal warmth for the Anglican and the Methodist, and later the Presbyterian hours of worship. She was a charming and courteous person, one whom everyone loved, and who loved us all equally — until she met Jack O'Holleran. Then human nature took its course.

January 22, 1901, was a windy day. Gusts whistled around the school chimney and found loose slivers under the eaves to turn into hurdy gurdies, with their plaintive, low-key music that only the prairie in winter knows. It was my task to stoke the pot-bellied stove that stood in the center of the floor. The eerie wind caused me to ply it that day with poplar wood until the stove turned red.

By early afternoon the sun was low to us, north of the 49th degree of latitude, and Miss Black had already

MANITOBA ARCHIVES

A home at Methven that the author would know as a boy.

lighted the oil lamp that hung from the ceiling. We were becoming drugged by the warmth of the stove, by the declining light in the room, by the music of the wind, and by the drifting snow outside. But this afternoon was to be different. Before it ended, we would come to feel ourselves a part of the great world outside – the world of history, of royalty, and of wonder.

There were perhaps twenty-five children in the one room of the Bertha school that day – Millers, Hardwicks, Durnins, Condons, Tuckers, Tompkinses, Swantons, Whartons, Englishes, and Prentices. Some still live in the district. Jack Fisher died in the Battle of Hill 70, and Harry Hardwick, and perhaps others of whom I have no knowledge, in other battles of the First World War. Some still live in retirement in the City of Brandon.

At three o'clock on that memorable afternoon Miss Black bade the younger classes to put away their books and slates, and to take out their 'copy books'. Under her watchful eye, they were quickly at their new task of reproducing, as best they might, the printed perfect script on the top line, doing so line after line, until they reached the bottom of the page.

For the next half hour, Miss Black's attention was reserved for us in the senior class – Sidney Miller, May English, Lizzie, Becky, and Will Hardwick, and myself. We were directed to take out our *Fifth Victorian Readers* and turn to the lesson of the day. This chanced to be Sir Walter Scott's graphic account from *The Abbott* of the escape of Mary, Queen of Scots from Lochleven Castle. Each of us took his turn in reading a paragraph or two. Usually our performances were mumbling, stumbling and monotonous. But not today. Scott's vivid portrayal of the story captured our fancy. We all read with emotion. Indeed we felt ourselves to be actors in the scene. Now Miss Black reached what was to be the climax to the day. She asked: had we ever heard of the wailing of Queen Mary's ghost? Not one of us ever had. We pressed her for the story.

It was 3:30 now, the last hour of the day. A time when, if every one had been good and faithful to his work, she would read to us from her favourite book of short stories. But a ghost story with a queen in it would be special. She went up to her desk and bade the other classes to put away their copy books. The din sounded like the pile driver in action three years earlier, while men were constructing the McKellar bridge across the river four miles to the south. The teacher's bell brought a quick silence. Only those who have lived all their lives

in Bertha District can conceive the hush with which we awaited the story. We edged forward in our seats.

'This is the story' began Miss Black, 'of the strange doings of the ghost of Mary, the Queen of Scotland, who reigned more than three hundred years ago. But first I must tell you a little of the proud hot-headed woman. Then perhaps you will see why her ghost has appeared time after time, years apart.'

She told us of the baby who was already queen and living in Scottish castles, and then how she was married to the Dauphin of France ('like our Prince of Wales'). Then she was Queen of France, but the King was sickly and died. So she returned to Scotland and her own Kingdom.

She told us of the politics of Scotland and England in those times and of the rivalries and hatred to which the young queen returned as a widow. She told us of the ancient traditions and acrimony, and the rights of clans. We marvelled, but were thankful too for the quiet friendships that prevailed around us.

Miss Black told us of how, when the Queen remarried, it was this time to her cousin, and her subjects were angered and embittered. Her husband took alarm, and perhaps in cowardice, he went over to her enemies. The Queen became desperate and plotted nothing less than his murder. We listened in horror. No one had ever disturbed a chicken in our henhouses. But when her second husband was dead she married the Earl of Bothwell, who had committed the awful deed. We could not imagine the rages of such people. Then Scotland rose in revolt. The Queen was dethroned and held a prisoner in Lochleven Castle. When she escaped she fled to England hoping that Queen Elizabeth who was her cousin would help her get back her throne in Scotland. But Elizabeth was not looking for more trouble. The King of Spain was getting together a great fleet and army to invade England. So Mary was imprisoned and for many years persisted in endless intrigue. At last she was brought to trial for plotting in 1585 and 1586 to take Elizabeth's life. She was declared guilty and executed at Fotheringhay Castle in 1587.

Now we come to the story of Queen Mary's ghost. Do not ask me why it did not haunt the halls of Fotheringhay Castle but chose to haunt Lochleven Castle where Mary had first been imprisoned. Or why it did not come every February 8 at the exact hour of her death. All is strange. But the strangest part of my story is not about where it chose to appear but the hour and the dreadful event that its coming had always foretold. The ghost has always – *I say always* – appeared as the clock struck the hour of midnight on the New Year's Eve before the death of the British sovereign.

'Now, this really happened' said Miss Black. Her voice dropped until it was barely audible above the wind that whistled and sang outside. 'Just three weeks ago, on last New Year's Eve, the clock in Lochleven Castle boomed the hour of midnight and the dawn of a new year. The lord and lady who lived in the castle had gone to bed. Their watchman was making his rounds to see that all was well. He was an old soldier who had fought in the Crimean War and had won the Victoria Cross for his bravery.

He had just reached the flat roof of the castle when far below he heard the clock strike twelve. At once he heard a strange sobbing. He walked to the top of the steps and stood still. The sound seemed to come from the dungeon far below, and as he listened it came nearer. He heard a chain clanking, dragged up one stone step after another. The sound reached the main floor, then the stairs that led to the bedroom floor, then the top of those stairs. The watchman's hand dropped to his sword. He must protect his lord and lady. He started down, resolute and determined. He listened as he descended step by step. The being retreated. Down it went before him, clanking and sobbing. He reached the main floor and the great iron door to the dungeon. It was shut and he pushed the iron bar across it as jailors had done in the cruel days long ago.

Then he started back up the stairs but as he ascended, the sound moved once more up from the dungeon. Up he went, certain that the iron door would bar the way. He reached the top floor and strained his ears. The door did not open, but the sound kept coming until it was again on the stairs leading to the upper floor. He held his oil lantern high and peering into darkness, started down. Again the sound retreated to the dungeon. He reached the iron door and felt its bolt, still in place.

Then he made a bold decision. He would stand guard at the dungeon door. But what was it he heard now? The sound had moved through the massive dungeon wall and was outside. The chain rattled and rustled across the grass below, and the sobbing continued. He rushed to a window but could see nothing. The sound passed through the postern gate, which did not squeak as it always did, and paused at the water's edge. The watchman, straining his eyes still saw nothing. Then he heard the sound of water as though a boat were moving; and the faint splash of muffled oars. The ghost was gone.

'What can this mean?' Miss Black asked. 'This ghost has always appeared on the New Year's Eve before the death of a king or queen. And this happened just three weeks ago. Will the Queen soon die? I wonder.'

As she spoke the octagonal clock on the south wall struck four. School was over. Now an even stranger thing happened. The last stroke of four had hardly died away when the door opened. In rushed a man. It was Jack O'Holleran. We shall never forget what he said. He was breathless, but managed to gasp: 'I've just been to the railway station at Nesbitt. The telegraph was ticking. The station master said "The Queen is dead".'

We hurried to wrap ourselves in coats, scarves, and mittens against winter's blast and went our old familiar routes to our scattered homes. But we were full of wonder and amazement. The Queen was dead. ◆

WALL HANGINGS FROM BAKER LAKE

By SHEILA BUTLER with photographs by JACK BUTLER

Graduates in painting and print making from the Carnegie Mellon University in Pittsburg, the Butlers have for three years been advisers to the Eskimo co-operative at Baker Lake in the Central Arctic.

ALL THE WALL HANGING ARTISTS in Baker Lake learned to sew from their mothers while living in igloos or summer tents on the land. They first sewed caribou skin clothing, using caribou sinew for thread.

'Inside a snow house there is not much light, and it is cold with frost on everything that you are working with,' recalls one artist, Nancy Kanayok.

Although the families with school-age children no longer spend the entire year on the land, many leave the settlement in the summer to live in tents and fish and hunt. The women all take some sewing with them, and Aqnaquinnak, Toodlook, Tyya and other Baker Lake women have made beautiful wall hangings while out on the land in their summer tents. The older woman, Marion Toodlook, wife of the artist Angusalluq, remembers the old life very well indeed.

'Snow houses were cold, your hands were cold, the skins were tough and hard, but there always seemed to be enough room. I didn't know that there could be a lot more space. In the old days we had an old woman who lived with us and she sewed our caribou skin tents.' Toodlook well remembers the hardship of the old life. 'I have sometimes wished that I were a fish, then my life would be lively and full of fun.'

In July, 1969, when we arrived in Baker Lake to attempt the introduction of print making, there was a sewing project in the community. Sponsored by the federal government, this project was separate from the Craft Shop, housed in another building, and concerned with garments only. It was primarily a machine-stitched, factory-oriented operation. No wall hangings were being made at that time. Owing to various marketing problems and difficulties arising from the women's dislike for the factory system, this sewing project was shut down in the early spring of 1970.

The opportunities for employment for adults in Baker Lake are extremely limited and so the closing of this project was a blow to the women of the community who depended on their sewing abilities to bring a little extra income to their families. Soon, many women were coming to the Craft Shop, standing patiently, rocking on their heels to soothe the babies they carried on their backs: an Eskimo sense of propriety demanded that they wait quietly for a suitable interval before asking their

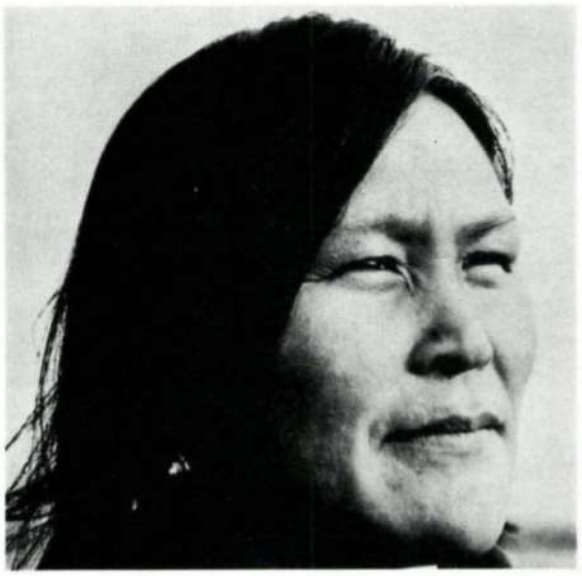
question. Their question was translated for us, 'We want something to do. Is there something that needs to be done?'

At that time our budget was stretched as far as seemed possible just to pay the printers and sculptors, and although we hated turning these women away, we could think of nothing to suggest. Not so easily discouraged, most of the women returned in the next few weeks with various sewn items for sale – traditional caribou skin boots, duffle socks made from blanket-weight wool fabric purchased at the Hudson's Bay Company store, women's outer garments or artiggis with the pouch for carrying babies on the back. As far as our budget would permit, we purchased the best of these items with Craft Shop funds and sold most of them to the non-Eskimo residents of Baker Lake who needed the warm arctic-style clothing. The women's artiggis were especially in demand by women who had small babies, since without a 'back-pack' they were doomed to months of staying indoors. Prams or strollers are a physical impossibility for mother and child alike in Baker Lake. The huge snow drifts and high winds and sub-zero temperatures prohibit the use of such commonplace southern methods of baby transportation.

Among these useful and beautiful articles of clothing we purchased some small, charming, stitched and appliquéd pictures, made from scraps left over from the cutting of garments. These first tentative efforts were repetitive animal patterns and scenes of traditional Eskimo life on the land. One of the first women to bring these small pictures for sale was Naomi Eeyee. She stitched some of her own design and used pencil

Naomi Eeyee reproduces the subtle greens and greys and delicate colours of the summer tundra in her hanging below. In a flowing horizonless composition, animals mingle with the men who depend on them for food and clothing.

Irene Ahvalakiak gives substance to the fantastic creatures of her imagination. These beings suggest interdependence and harmony between man and animal as one form melts into another, the strong stripes unifying them into one.



drawings by Itoolookutna as the source for the design of a few others. Itoolookutna is too old to be able to sew well any more. Soon we were treated to our first sight of the wall hangings by Jessie Oonark.

Oonark was then, and is still, one of the most accomplished Eskimo artists. Word soon travelled around the settlement that we were paying better and better prices for these interesting appliquéd pictures, and soon more and more women were bringing them to the shop. We called them wall hangings and we learned that the Eskimo ladies had a word for them – *neevingatah* – and that they had made similar pictures in 1966 and 1967, when the first Baker Lake sewing project was managed by Elizabeth Whitton, the Anglican missionary's wife. Mrs. Whitton remembers vividly an early wall hanging by Oonark's daughter, Victoria Mumyukshoaluk, depicting the changing seasons in the Arctic.

The idea of designs cut from one fabric and appliquéd to another piece of fabric was of course not new to the Baker Lake women since this is the method of decoration for their traditional skin clothing. In decorating the caribou skin clothing, geometric designs are cut from the white belly fur of the caribou and set into the main portions of the garment which are made from the brownish-grey part of the caribou fur. The technical

Rita Ahveeleeayok and her husband stand in front of her immense hanging in the gymnasium of the Baker Lake school.

difference between this and the sewing of the wall hangings is that the cut pieces for the hangings are sewn down to a rectangular, uncut backing, whereas the cut pieces in the skin sewing are set into matching cut-out areas in the garment. The only exception to this distinction is that Oonark, in some wave of nostalgia, I suppose, sometimes reverts to the methods of skin sewing in her wall hangings and laboriously cuts corresponding holes in the backing, setting in the matching designed pieces cut from another colour.

As the number and quality of these small hangings grew, we wanted to provide better materials, and particularly some larger pieces of fabric for backing to give enlarged scope to some of the breathtaking designs. When the garment sewing factory had closed, much of the inventory of fabric had been stored in the upstairs loft of the Craft Shop. So, using melton cloth or the lightweight wool fabric called stroud, we cut larger backing sizes and smaller pieces to be used for cutting the figures. We gave this cloth, along with several colours of embroidery floss, to the most promising of the wall hanging artists. The use of new large pieces of cloth rather than scraps, expanded the creative possibilities and heightened everyone's enthusiasm. We gave little in the way of aesthetic criticism but simply suggested that maybe a decorative border could be added, or more in the way of decorative stitching. Of invaluable assistance was Ruby Arknaknark, the young Eskimo woman who was at that time acting as our secretary. She did the vital job of interpreting in most of our conversations with the wall hanging artists, none of whom spoke English.

Using, as we did, material that simply came to hand for the first large hangings, the range of colours was rather limited in the earlier work. The backings and the figures were made of the same weight of cloth, the available colours being red, white, or navy duffle cloth, or red, white, yellow, tan, green, or black melton cloth. By the late summer of 1970 the wall hangings looked promising and we had made quite a dent in the inventory of stock left from the old sewing project. Large quantities of supplies come into Baker only once a year, when the ice has melted sufficiently in late August to allow a ship to enter Baker Lake from Hudson Bay via Chesterfield Inlet. When the time came to order things for sea-lift in the summer of 1970, we had confidence enough in the hangings to order a large supply of many colours of felt to be used for the cut figures, more melton cloth for the backings, and an array of many, many colours of embroidery floss. This was a further incentive to the talented seamstresses, one of the high points being the production of an immense hanging, approximately 12 feet by 20 feet, by the young woman Rita Ahveeleeayok. This large scale is even more remarkable when you consider that the entire work of cutting

and sewing was done in a very tiny three-room house in the midst of Ahveeleeayok's family of three small children and a continuous stream of visitors, relatives, and friends. In fact, the artist was never able to see the entire hanging because her house was too small to hold the work unfolded. She saw it section by section, with finished portions being folded up as work progressed. The only wall in Baker Lake large enough to hold this hanging was in the newly constructed school gymnasium. So when it was completed we took it to the gymnasium for the first viewing. The hanging seemed so right in the setting that teachers and students worked to raise money and subsequently purchased Ahveeleeayok's large hanging for the Kamanituak Public School in Baker Lake. It has remained permanently on the wall where it was first hung.

Ahveeleeayok's working conditions are the rule, not the exception, in Baker Lake. All the hangings are made in the artists' own homes. The backings are cut at the shop, and the felt cut into 1/8 and 1/4 yard pieces. All other cutting and all designing and sewing are done at home. Although their homes are tiny, they prefer to work there for the majority of artists have several small children. A cottage industry enables mothers to keep an eye on the children and earn money at the same time. Baker Lake mothers are traditionally permissive in their methods of child-rearing, so some of the women prefer

Elizabeth Arngnatkoak, and below, the detail from one of her hangings.

to sew late at night when the children are sleeping, rather than reprimand them for interfering. Many of the women sew while sitting on a bed or cot, reminiscent of the old life when women sat on the snow sleeping platforms in the igloos to sew. Oonark, for instance, always works this way.

In the spring of 1971 the Baker Lake Sewing Shop was opened again as an industrial project of the Northwest Territories Government. This time we rejected the factory system, emphasizing instead the strength of the Baker Lake women in the area of exclusive hand-crafted sewing. The making of wall hangings was transferred from the Craft Shop to the Sewing Shop at that time, with twenty women working regularly on hangings of high quality. Given the extra shop space and materials, we were able to enlarge our scope and begin to make hand-made clothing, beautifully decorated by the same women who make the wall hangings. Now they work both on clothing – parkas, mitts, vests, hats – and on hangings, and are pleased with the variety of work to be done.

The backbone of the operation of the Sewing Shop is a young man named Harold Eeteeroyuk. He does all the cutting of garments and wall hanging backings, most of the paper work for the shop, and all of the interpreting for us in our conversations with the artists. All the day to day management of the shop – including packing,

Reminiscent of an ancient Egyptian tomb painting is this small (17" x 17") elegant design by Jessie Oonark. At left is seamstress Marjorie Aglowak, wife of the sculptor, Matthew Akeeak.

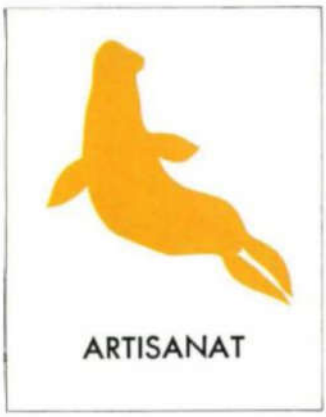
shipping, and sales – pricing the work, and paying the artists is Harold's responsibility and this is as important to the making of the hangings as is the sewing.

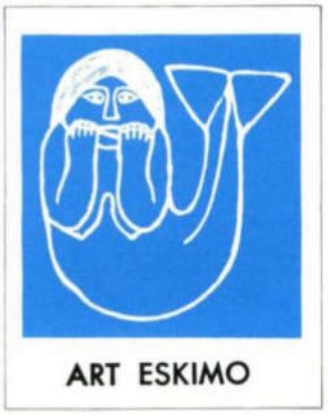
Harold Eeteeroyuk's mother, Elizabeth Arngnatkoak, sews some of the most beautiful hangings with the Arctic animals of land and water as her subject matter. Using an over-all pattern of stitchery to achieve the effect of a true furry animal texture, Arngnatkoak's designs show an anatomical and textural understanding of the creatures she portrays. The game management officer in Baker Lake was particularly struck by the reality of the animal life in Arngnatkoak's work.

In southern Canada Jessie Oonark is the best known of the Baker Lake artists, and by far the most prolific. She has had a one-woman show of her hangings and also of her drawings. Alternating between sewing and drawing, she works constantly and divides her earnings among her adult children (most of them artists in their own right) and her many grand-children. There is an emotional intensity about Oonark's strong two-dimensional shape-oriented style, reminiscent in many cases of ancient Egyptian tomb painting. It is important to note that elements in many of her designs which appear to be simple geometric shapes are actually severely elegant stylistic representations of objects vital to the old Eskimo culture. Circles are more than circles – they are drums, the symbol of the drum dance, the central ritual in the ancient shamanistic hunting religion shared by our long ago European ancestors. An ancient part of us responds to Oonark's circles. Similarly, in the many-figured hanging with the sun face reproduced on the cover, we see that Oonark gives prominence to the triangle with one rounded side, the woman's knife. This and the needle were the woman's most vital tools, without which she and her family could not survive. A contemporary note is introduced by the snowmobiles which have generally replaced the traditional sleds and dog teams.

Despite the joyous elements and colours in all the many hangings, the evidence is there too, of the incredibly harsh aspects of the old life on the land. Death by starvation or disease was a constant threat and no Eskimo wants to return completely to the old ways. The new danger is that the Eskimo people will lose touch completely with their cultural roots, their language, and their way of life and will have little with which to replace the loss. The Baker Lake people were among the most isolated of Eskimo groups and are far from entering twentieth century life. The area is barren of the minerals or natural raw materials which promise a hope for the future in other parts of the Arctic. While there is concern for the economic future of the tiny wind-swept community, there is hope too, through the innate artistry and determination of its women who have created the Baker Lake wall hangings. ◆

The black and white igloo tag and the blue and white Quebec tag are the buyer's guarantee that carvings are genuine. The name of the carver and his home settlement are usually listed inside. The orange seal and the blue and gold tags are for handicrafts.





THIS TAG IS YOUR GUARANTEE THAT THIS ARTICLE HAS BEEN MADE BY A CANADIAN ESKIMO
CETTE ETIQUETTE GARANTIT L'AUTHENTICITE DE CET ARTICLE D'ARTISANAT ESQUIMAU CANADIEN
DESCRIPTION
SIZE GRANDEUR
MAKER ARTISAN
LOCATION LOCALITE

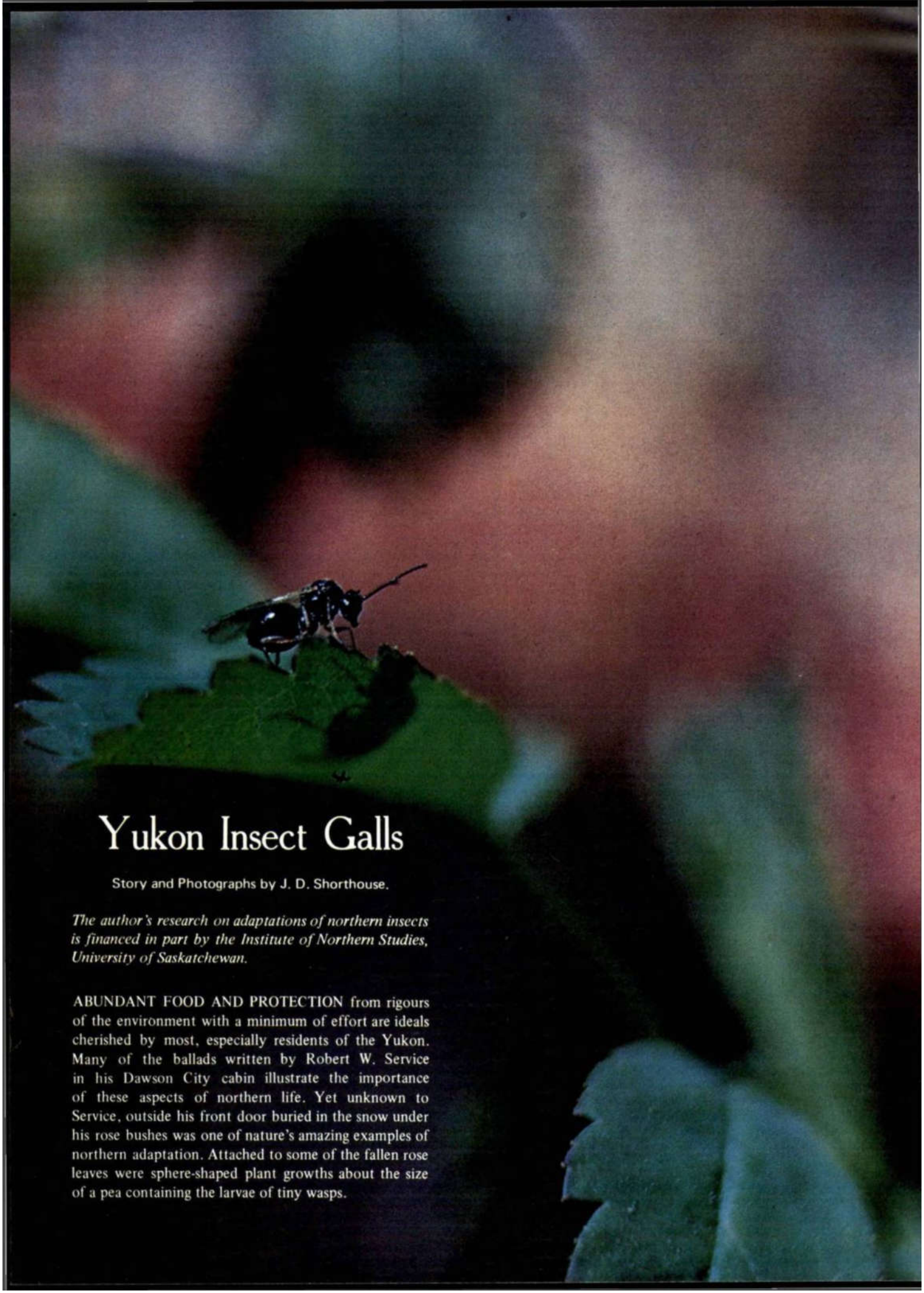
ESKIMO ART

Genuine or Imitation

THE SOAPSTONE SCULPTURE of the Eskimo people has had international acclaim and in the wake of its success, a variety of mass produced imitation carvings have appeared on the market. These are usually cast from a mould in a composition of plastic or plaster of Paris, and painted black. They are smooth and do not have the weight or feel of stone. An imitation may carry a label that uses the figure of an Eskimo or an Eskimo word and the text may contain the words 'original', 'authentic', or 'Canadian' to mislead the buyer. To be within the bounds of the law there will be such phrases as 'based on an original Canadian carving' or 'inspired by the original design of a Canadian artist', but the label will not state 'This is an original Eskimo carving.'

To protect both purchaser and artist, a certification mark using the symbol of the igloo was designed by the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development. The mark was registered under the National Trade Mark and True Labelling Act and is held by Her Majesty in right of Canada. The black and white igloo tag is attached to genuine carvings from Eskimo communities in the Northwest Territories. The sea goddess tag, also on this page, identifies genuine carvings distributed by La Fédération des Coopératives du Nouveau-Québec, the representative of the Eskimos co-operatives in Quebec. The two other labels are used on genuine Eskimo artifacts or handicrafts such as parkas, leggings, or sealskin animals. The orange label depicting a seal identifies work from Quebec and the blue and gold tag is attached to items from the Northwest Territories.

There are rare exceptions to the label rule and these are found only in highly reputable stores or galleries. Some major dealers use their own labels on which they record the name of the artist and his settlement. The carvings in this case may have been selected by the dealer on a trip through the Arctic or they may have been purchased from a private collection for resale. In this case the dealer will be direct and knowledgeable about Eskimo artists and their work. ◆



Yukon Insect Galls

Story and Photographs by J. D. Shorthouse.

The author's research on adaptations of northern insects is financed in part by the Institute of Northern Studies, University of Saskatchewan.

ABUNDANT FOOD AND PROTECTION from rigours of the environment with a minimum of effort are ideals cherished by most, especially residents of the Yukon. Many of the ballads written by Robert W. Service in his Dawson City cabin illustrate the importance of these aspects of northern life. Yet unknown to Service, outside his front door buried in the snow under his rose bushes was one of nature's amazing examples of northern adaptation. Attached to some of the fallen rose leaves were sphere-shaped plant growths about the size of a pea containing the larvae of tiny wasps.

Early in the spring the larvae change into adults which chew their way out of the gall and immediately begin a search for young buds and leaves in which to lay their eggs. When the eggs hatch, the young larvae begin feeding on the plant and as chemical substances in their saliva bathe the plant cells, the host plant is induced to surround the invading insects with layers of nutritious cells. The larvae are thus guaranteed a constant food supply as well as a dwelling in which to pass the winter.

Such is the world of the gall insects – a select group of creatures that have evolved the incredible ability to control growth patterns of plant structures. Galls are caused by several groups of insects: wasps, aphids, sawflies, midges, and a few beetles and moths. All gall-forming insects show a high degree of preference for one species of host plant. Each insect also causes a gall of constant size and shape. Although many of the buds, stems, or leaves may be modified into grotesque sizes and shapes, the plants appear scarcely harmed.

Little had been known about the galls of the Yukon until last summer when specimens were collected along the Alaska Highway and the roads between Whitehorse and Dawson City. Most work on insect galls has been done in the northern United States, but as information has accumulated it has become increasingly important to know what species exist farther north. The ancestors of some North American plants spread to this continent across the once-present Bering Strait land bridge and it is assumed that many of the gall insects came with them. It also can be assumed that the species found in southern Canada are related in some way to those that may still be present in the north.

This gall, found on the leaves of a wild rose in southern Saskatchewan, harbours seven species of insects besides the insect that formed it. Five of these species were found in similiar galls collected near Dawson City. At the right is the rose gall opened to show the wasp larvae.

Yukon galls have now been found on willows, poplars, and wild rose. Several poplar trees were examined on which nearly every leaf was galled by aphids. Only two kinds of rose galls caused by tiny wasps were found in the central Yukon compared to about twenty kinds found on the same plants in southern Saskatchewan. Both rose galls were of the type formed on leaves and their presence may be due to the protection the wasps receive when the galls fall to the ground late in the season and are subsequently buried by insulating layers of snow. Missing were the bud and stem galls which are so prominent on plants found further south. Rose gall insects cannot tolerate temperatures much below freezing and it is suggested that wasps forming stem galls are not present because they would be restricted to spending at least part of the winter above the snow. The presence of midge galls formed on the stems of willows suggests that these insects can tolerate lower temperatures than can the rose gall formers.

A variety of other insects besides the gall former often occupy galls and the relationships of the inhabitants result in communities of fascinating complexity. The presence of numerous wasp larvae in a gall may attract predaceous insects and so a community develops. Some insects have lived in contact with certain galls for generation upon generation resulting in their association with galls now being compulsory.

The ability to alter plant growth at will would be a valuable aid to scientists concerned with the task of increasing plant mass for human consumption. The question of how these small insects have mastered the art remains a field of research worthy of attention. ◆

A willow leaf gall caused by a sawfly and below, a willow bud gall that has developed in such an unnatural way that it resembles a pine cone. The midge larva is nestled in the core.

BEFORE AND AFTER

A Look at the Peace and Parsnip Rivers

The Finlay River about a mile above Deserters' Canyon, and at the right, after the waters came.

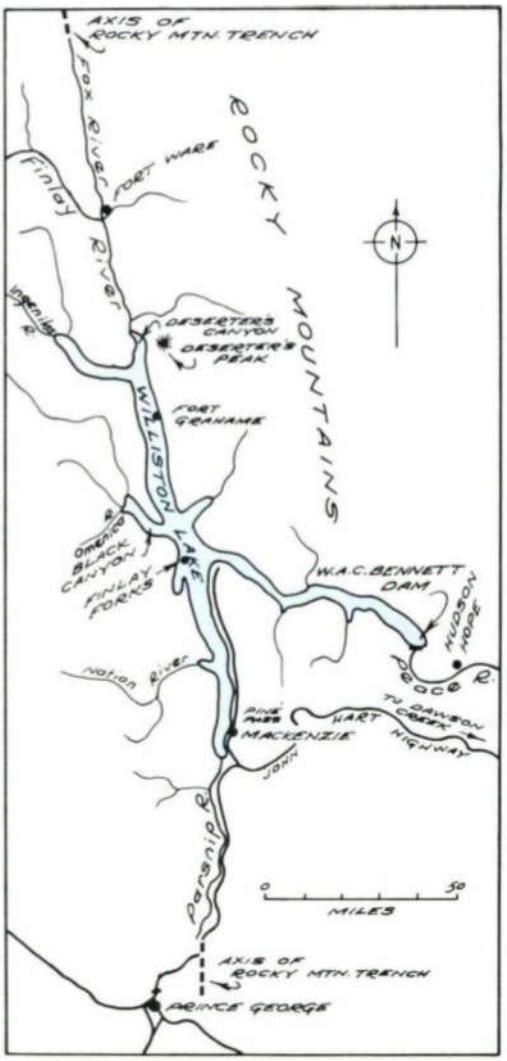
BY PALMER E. LEWIS

The author is a Seattle business man with an interest in photography and the history of the Canadian Northwest.

IT WAS ABOUT NOON on 2 August, 1965 when I met Art Van Somer on the Parsnip River near the bridge which carries the John Hart Highway over this northern British Columbia stream. I had arranged to spend two weeks with Art while he guided me through that soon to be obliterated wilderness of the Rocky Mountain Trench occupied by the valleys of the Parsnip and Finlay Rivers and their tributaries. Time was running out to have a last look at a few of the old landmarks . . . Finlay Forks, Black Canyon of the Omenica, what was left of the Hudson's Bay Company post at Fort Grahame, and Deserters' Canyon on the Finlay.

I wanted to see this country before it was inundated by the waters of the Peace River impounded behind a 600-foot-high power dam then under construction at the up stream entrance of Rocky Mountain Canyon. Some of these rivers had been the route of the North Westers after 1793, and then the Hudson's Bay Company when the fur trade pushed west of the Rocky Mountains in these latitudes to establish posts in New Caledonia.

In the two fleeting weeks of exploration with Art in 1965, I 'accompanied' Mackenzie, Fraser, Black, Butler, and many another early explorer of these valleys in the Trench. They, however, had not been equipped with cameras, as was I, to record what they saw. It was a beautiful and profound wilderness; home of the Sekani Indians and much wild life; miles of fast water and



Sekani Indians near mouth of Ingenika River, a tributary of the Finlay.

awesome canyons. An unexpected bonus of this trip was becoming acquainted with Art Van Somer, as one can learn to know a man beside a camp fire. We were total strangers before setting out down the Parsnip that August afternoon. The few days we spent together in the wilds developed a lasting friendship.

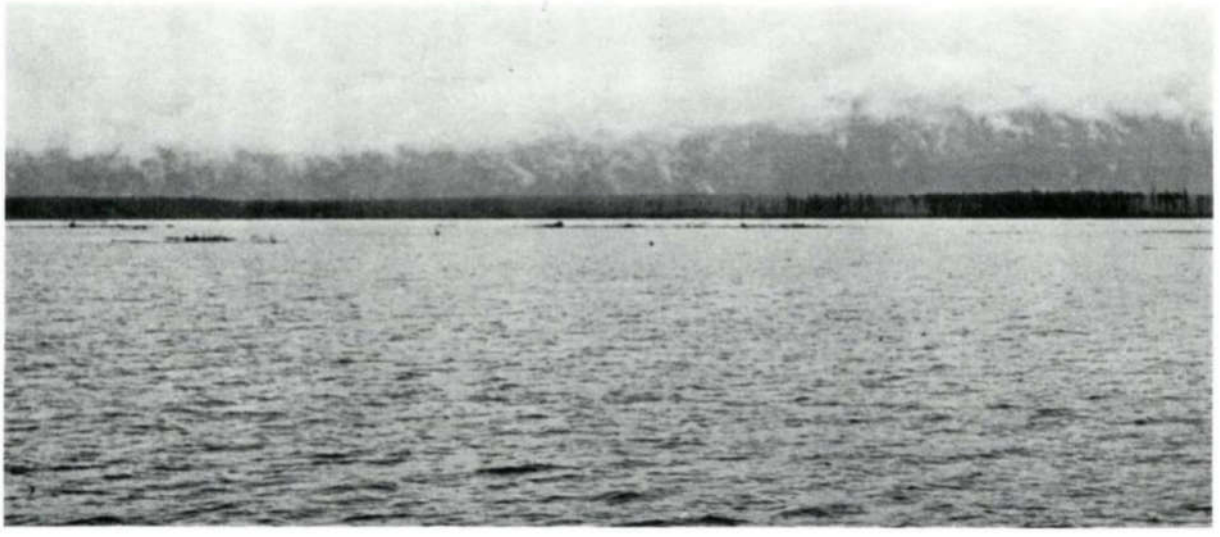
Six years later, on the evening of 25 June, 1971, I was standing on what remained of the sandy shore of the back eddy pool below Deserters' Canyon near one of our 1965 camping places. As night settled on the wilderness, I mused over the changes that had taken place in the past 147 years and one month – almost to the day; changes that for the most part had all occurred within the past six years. I recalled Samuel Black's *Rocky Mountain Journal* (Hudson's Bay Record Society, Vol. 18). The entry was dated May the 27th [1824].

> . . . at this place the River runs deep between perpendicular Rock very high. . . . the River had forced a Passage through . . . a little before sun set. the Canoe after some tight Work to pass a Cap of Rock arrived at a small Sandy Bay the beginning of the Portage . . .

Black, on orders from George Simpson, Governor of the Northern Department of Rupert's Land for the Hudson's Bay Company, was exploring the Finlay River and the country through which it flowed. The roaring torrent in the canyon that May evening was too much to contemplate for two of Black's party. During the night they stole a small canoe and some supplies, and deserting Black, fled back down the Finlay. The place thus came to be called Deserters' Canyon – the name by which it has ever since been known.

During those six years between 1965 and 1971, the W. A. C. Bennett Dam had been completed on the Peace River. The trapped waters behind it had nearly reached their maximum elevation to form Williston Lake, with

The buildings that remained of Fort Grahame on the Finlay as they appeared in August 1965. The site of the old fort which was closed in June 1949, has disappeared beneath the waters of Williston Lake (shown below).



Tree length logs rafted into bundles, strapped with wire rope and corralled by boom sticks, await towage to the mills at the new town of Mackenzie, B.C.

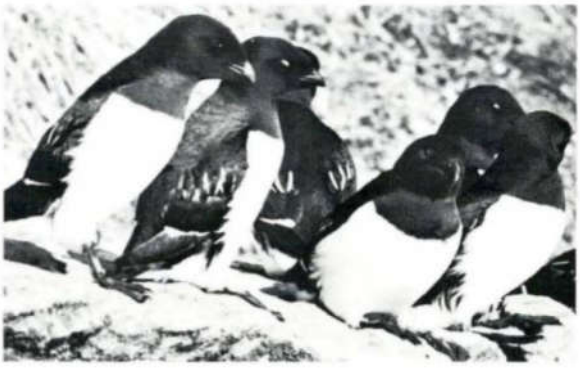
an area of some 680 square miles. Its surface had approximately 28 feet more to rise: this would 'take out' Deserters' Canyon. By June 1971 the lake barely extended into it

Today, if any of the venturesome fur traders, or even such late comers as the 1965 'explorers' were to try to find their way through this section of the Rocky Mountain Trench, they would be unable to locate any familiar landmarks below the 2,400 foot contour.

In time, the floating debris that clogs the lake in many places, obstructing the shore line and presenting a hazard to boats, will either be removed or sink to the bottom. The visible drowned trees will eventually disappear through natural causes. Even the devastating forest fires, largely caused by lightning, that have plagued these watersheds for centuries, may be controlled or minimized – in time. ◆

Photographs and text by FRED BRUEMMER

DOVEKIES



MAY, in the dialect of the Polar Eskimos of the Thule region in northwestern Greenland, is called *agpaliarssuit tikarfiat* – the dovekies are coming. By tradition the dovekies (or little auks as they are called in Britain) are supposed to arrive on 5 May at their breeding cliffs near Savigsivik facing Melville Bay, southernmost of the six Polar Eskimo settlements, and three days later they are expected at Siorapaluk in the north, the northernmost village in the world.

We were at the floe edge in May, 1971, Jes Qujaukitsok and I, waiting for seal and hoping for narwhal. It was an enchanted night, clear and cold and beautiful; the sea glossy black, the ice deep blue, the light honey-yellow on the far mountains. Belugas swam in the distance, milky white backs arching out of the dark water and we could hear them trill and grunt in the quiet of the night. Eider ducks flew past in great flocks. A pair of ivory gulls sailed over us on long pure-white wings, their cries shrill and tern-like. And then the dovekies came, great dark clouds in the blue-green sky, tens of thousands, maybe hundreds of thousands, all winging north, towards the great breeding slopes of the Siorapaluk-Etah area to keep their date with destiny.

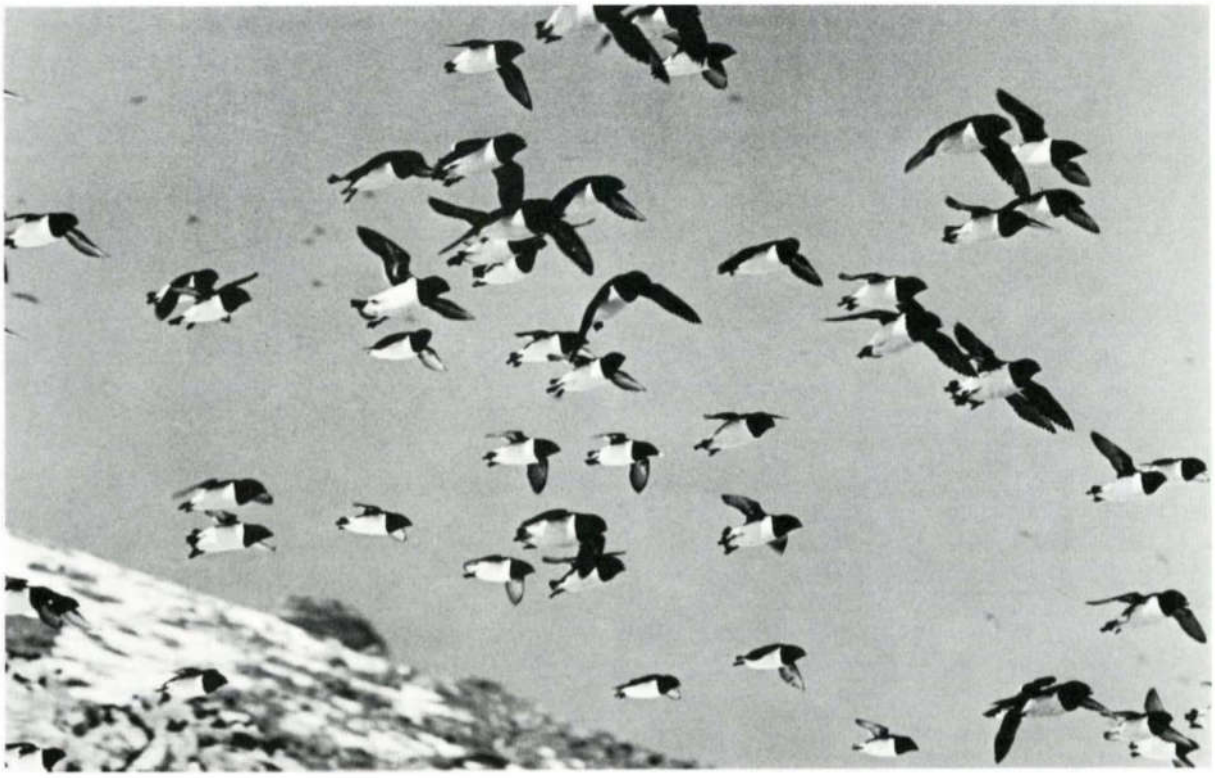
Dovekies are small alcidae, about the size of starlings but chubbier, their plumage black on head and back, white on chest and belly, the beak short and stout, the feet dark and webbed. They breed in the High Arctic; northwest and northeast Greenland, on Jan Mayen, Spitsbergen, Franz Josef Land, Novaya Zemlya, and Severnaya Zemlya, in colonies that number millions. Their total population may exceed 80 million.

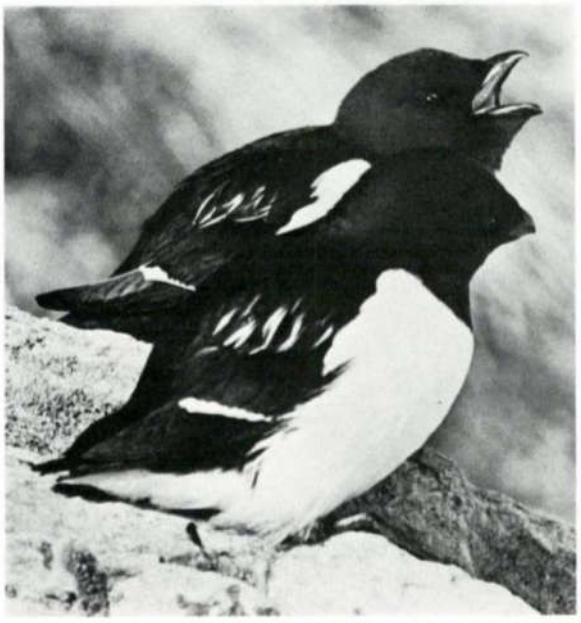
In flight, dovekies look like fat cigars with wings. They love company and usually crowd together in immense flocks. Captain Beechey saw them in the 19th century on northern Baffin Bay: 'There must have been nearly four million birds on the wing at one time.' Another traveller of the same period wrote: '. . . when they take flight they actually darken the sky.'

To the Polar Eskimos, they were once a vital food, and they are still important today. At the beginning of the Little Ice Age in the 16th century Eskimos left the farthest north, or died out. Only the Polar Eskimos remained, occupying a narrow coastal strip of land between ice cap and sea, bounded in the north by the mighty Humboldt Glacier and in the south by the vast succession of glittering glaciers pouring into Melville Bay. They forgot the use of bow and arrow, abandoned the kayak, and finally forgot the existence of other people. Of them only a vague, fairy-tale-like folk memory remained, and the Polar Eskimos who numbered about 200 thought of themselves as the only people on earth, in a land surrounded by ice. In winter they lived primarily on sea mammals; in summer, when the ice broke, nearly entirely on sea birds: eider ducks, murres and, most important, dovekies. The ornithologist J. D. Figgins wrote in 1899: 'Without the dovekies the little tribe of north Greenland Eskimos would long since have perished of hunger. The ground about their villages is thickly strewn with the bones of the dovekie, giving abundant proof of the millions which have been devoured.'

John Ross, sailing into Melville Bay (where he 'discovered' the Polar Eskimos on 8 August 1818) saw 'myriads . . . of that species of sea-fowl known by the name of the little awk . . . together with vast numbers of whales and sea-unicornes'. The whalers, who called the dovekies 'rotches', later often supplied their ships with them. To save ammunition, they killed them in the water with boat hooks and 'even shot them with dried peas', as the explorer E. K. Kane noted.

The High Arctic seas are extremely rich in nutrients and during the brief but intense summer, under constant daylight, the growth of phytoplankton is stupendous, and planktonic animals living on it swarm through the polar waters. This is the dovekie's food, mainly little planktonic crustaceans, and also pteropods, particularly those black, winged pelagic snails which the Polar Eskimos call *tulugarssaq* – the ones that look like ravens. Dipping down into the water, like corks pulled under, dovekies, swimming with feet and wings, quickly cram their stomachs with this rich harvest and bob up again, or carry it home to their chicks in cheek-pouches so swollen, it looks as if they have mumps.





All day and most of the arctic night, the air above the dovekie colonies is crowded with flying birds. Above, a dovekie sings his song.

The rocks of the many-mile-long talus slopes where the dovekies nest are covered with the bright orange lichen *Caloplaca elegans,* which the Polar Eskimos, less elegantly, call *sunain anak* — the sun's excrement. The hills and valleys nearby are well fertilized, and plants grow in abundance. Near the colonies, peat accumulation can be 12 to 15 feet thick. Ravens, gyrfalcon, and glaucous gulls patrol the colonies; the dovekies are their main food in summer. The rich vegetation growth near the colonies provides food for hares and ptarmigan. Both are numerous near dovekie slopes.

For the arctic fox, summer near a dovekie colony is one long feast. Arctic foxes are dimorphic; nature produces a white and a blue edition. For some reason which scientists, to their chagrin, have not yet been able to explain, arctic foxes living primarily on lemmings (as in most of arctic Canada) are usually white, while those living mainly on sea birds (as on northwest Greenland, Jan Mayen, or islands in the Bering Sea) are usually blue. Lemmings are cyclic animals, and white fox populations wax and wane in rhythm with the lemming cycle. Dovekies are a more reliable food source and blue fox populations tend to be more stable. But their seasons are sharply divided into one of plenty, from May to end of August when the dovekies are there, and one of dearth, from September to May when they are not. So in summer, when the dovekies swarm over the scree slopes and there is an egg or a chick under nearly every stone, the provident little foxes lay up stores for the winter

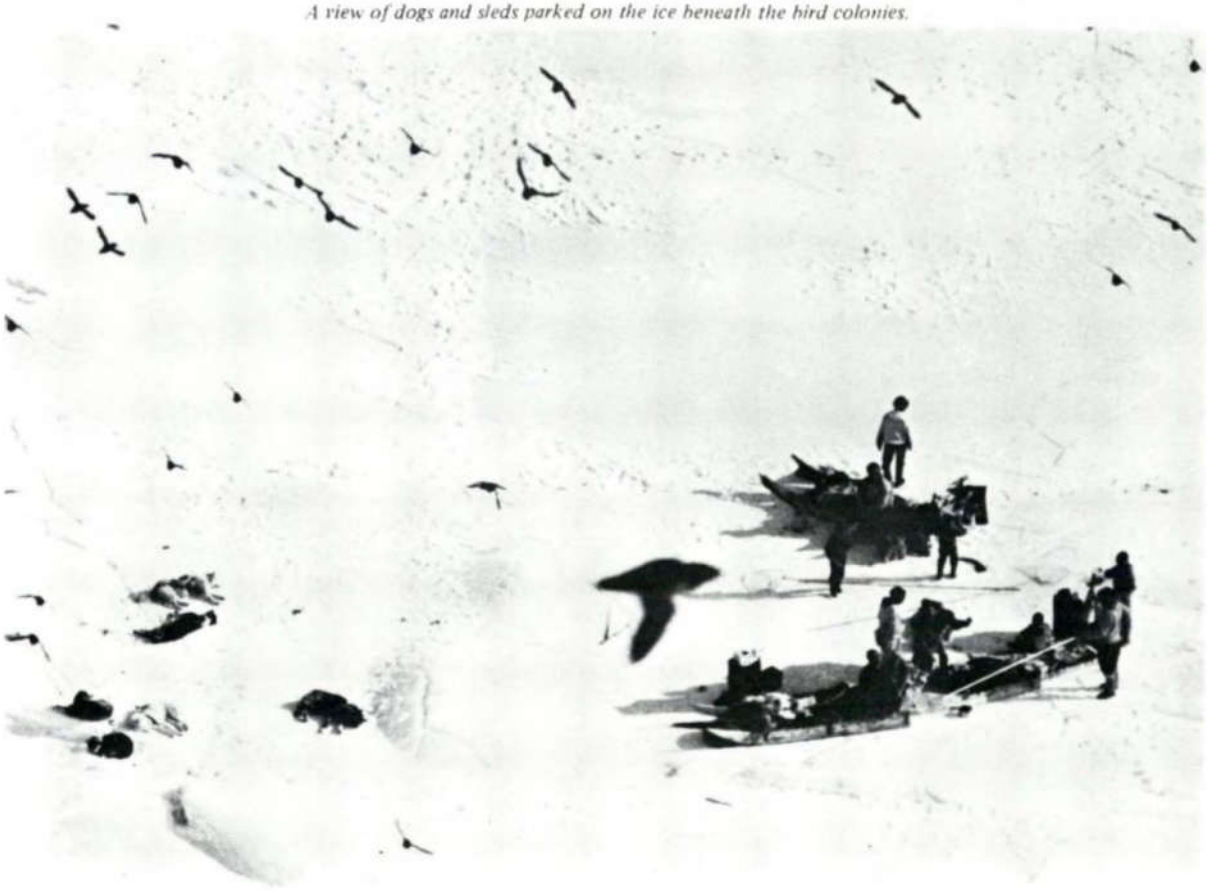
ahead. The Danish scientist Alwin Pedersen found a foxe's cache. 'It contained thirty-six little auks, two young guillemots, and four snow-buntings, as well as a large number of little auk eggs. The frozen bodies of the birds were neatly arranged in a long row . . . and the eggs were heaped in a pile . . . The whole store would have provided food for a fox for at least a month . . . '

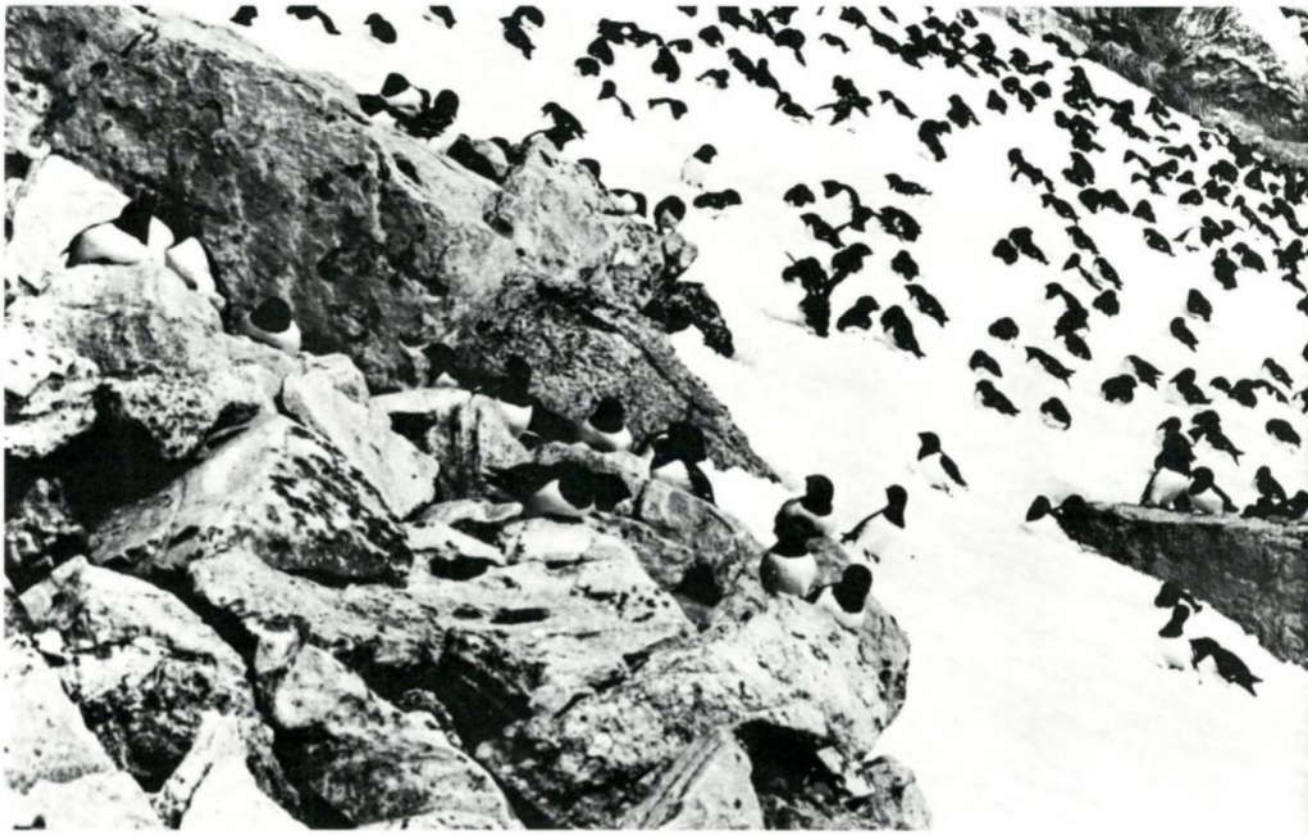
Although their caches are buried by snow in winter, the foxes seem to have no trouble finding them. Most of the dovekies in these caches have their heads bitten off and the Polar Eskimos who seem to have an appropriate legend apropos of nearly everything, explain this with the following story: 'Long ago, a fox cached dovekies. But one of the birds wasn't quite dead and when fall came and it got cold, it awoke and cried "It is cold! Let us fly south!" Since the dovekie had returned from death, its cry had magic power, and all the cached dovekies revived and flew away, and the foxes spent a very hungry winter. Ever since, the foxes bite the heads off all dovekies they catch and cache.'

The dovekies arrive at their nesting grounds in May, but do not lay their eggs until the latter part of June. Their first visits are short and perfunctory. They arrive in immense swarms and as these dense masses of birds wheel and turn high in the sky, they form alternately white and black clouds, depending on whether their backs or bellies are turned to the observer. As May turns into June, they spend more and more time on the steep talus slopes, sit in great groups on snow drifts, crowd together on favourite rocks, poke into clefts and crevices, soar suddenly into the air in a peculiar, butterfly-like display flight, or sit cosily together, warbling the dovekie love-song. The millions of individual trills and chirps, and occasionally shrill cries, blend together into one great, enveloping, throbbing, pulsating noise. From a distance it sounds vaguely like a 10,000-piece chamber orchestra scraping away industriously though not very harmoniously.

When frightened by an enemy, a gyrfalcon, glaucous gull, or raven flying overhead, the dovekies hurtle themselves into space in great masses (the panic being contagious), rush down the mountain at fantastic speed, wheel and usually swoop back and forth laterally across the mountain side. I think they use a variant of the technique biologists call 'mobbing'. When a falcon attacks a large flock of starlings, the birds, instead of scattering, will bunch tightly, envelope the falcon in a dense 'mob', and the falcon, with so many targets so near, is incapable of concentrating on any one victim and consequently gets none. The dovekies, too, seem to seek safety in mass

A view of dogs and sleds parked on the ice beneath the bird colonies.



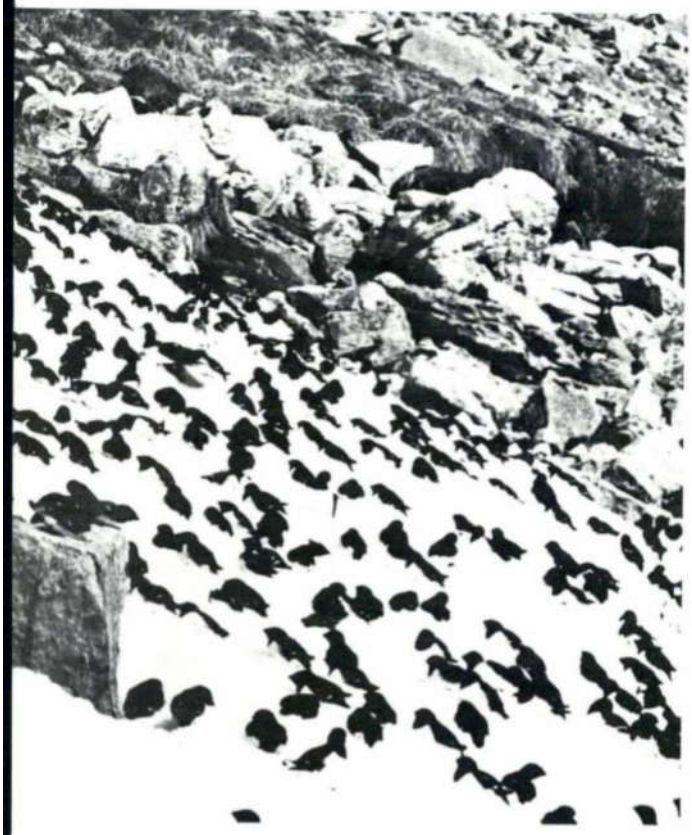


flights. The only time I saw glaucous gulls hunt flying dovekies with great success, was when there were only a few stragglers on the slopes. Whenever one flew up, a gull rushed after it, knocked it down into the rocks (where it sometimes managed to escape) or onto the ice, and there had no trouble catching the half-stunned bird. A helicopter pilot from Thule Air Base told me he had once flown near a dovekie slope and instead of fleeing, the birds had rushed at his machine *en masse*, mistaking it presumably for 'super-gull', and he had spent some sweat-soaked moments before he could get away from the 'mobbing' birds.

For such a small bird, the dovekie lays a very large egg (averaging 48mm by 34mm). Polar Eskimo mothers in the past used to tie a dovekie's foot to new-born girls so they would have large babies when they grew up. The dovekie does not build a nest, but lays its egg on the ground under rocks or in a suitable crevice. After a 24-day incubation period, a dark-downed, voracious chick emerges and keeps its parents busy for the next twenty days or so stuffing the little glutton with plankton. Towards the end of August the chicks are fledged and, a bit wobbly, try to fly with their parents out to sea. In fall and winter they migrate south, keeping close to the ice edge by preference. Many come to the sea regions east and north of Newfoundland. 'Bullbirds', the Newfoundlanders call them.

To the Polar Eskimos, dovekies have always been of great importance. In summer, in the past, they were their main food. Indirectly they were responsible for the region's wealth in hares, ptarmigan, gulls, and ravens, all of some importance to the Eskimos as food. Foxes, dependent upon dovekies, provided (and still provide) the Eskimos with clothing: parkas for children, women and, in former times, men. The women wear delightful little fox fur pants, attractive and warm. And *artiggis*, inner parkas, were made in the past from dovekie skin. About 60 to 80 dovekies were carefully skinned, and the skins given to old women to chew off the yellow subcutaneous fat, because their smooth, worn teeth were less likely to damage the fragile skins. They were then sewn together with narwhal sinew. Such an artiggi, the result of infinite labour, was warm but delicate. Since there were few caribou in the Thule district (due to adverse climatic changes and, later, overhunting) fox and birdskin parkas were suitable substitutes.

The simplest method to catch dovekies was to haul them (and their eggs) out from underneath stones. The Eskimos used to set thousands of *negat*, snares made of narwhal sinew to catch the birds. Some they simply killed by throwing stones, and in fall they rolled rocks aside to get the chicks. But by far the most important method was to catch flying dovekies with long-handled nets. This *ipu* consisted of a scarfed bone, ivory or

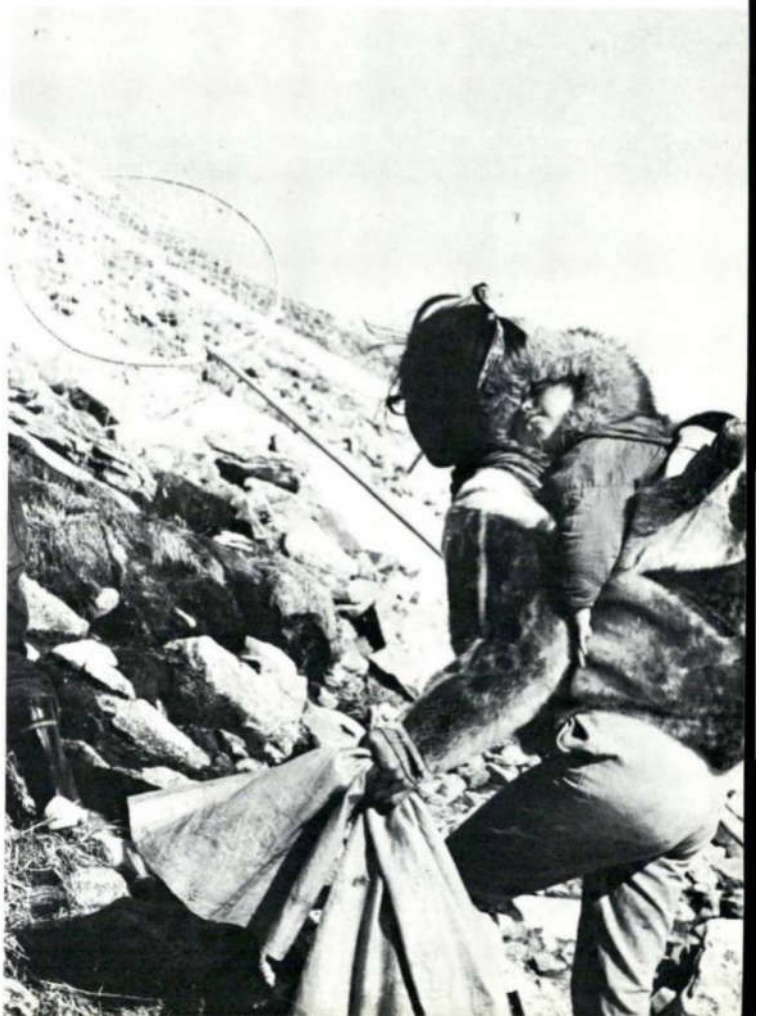


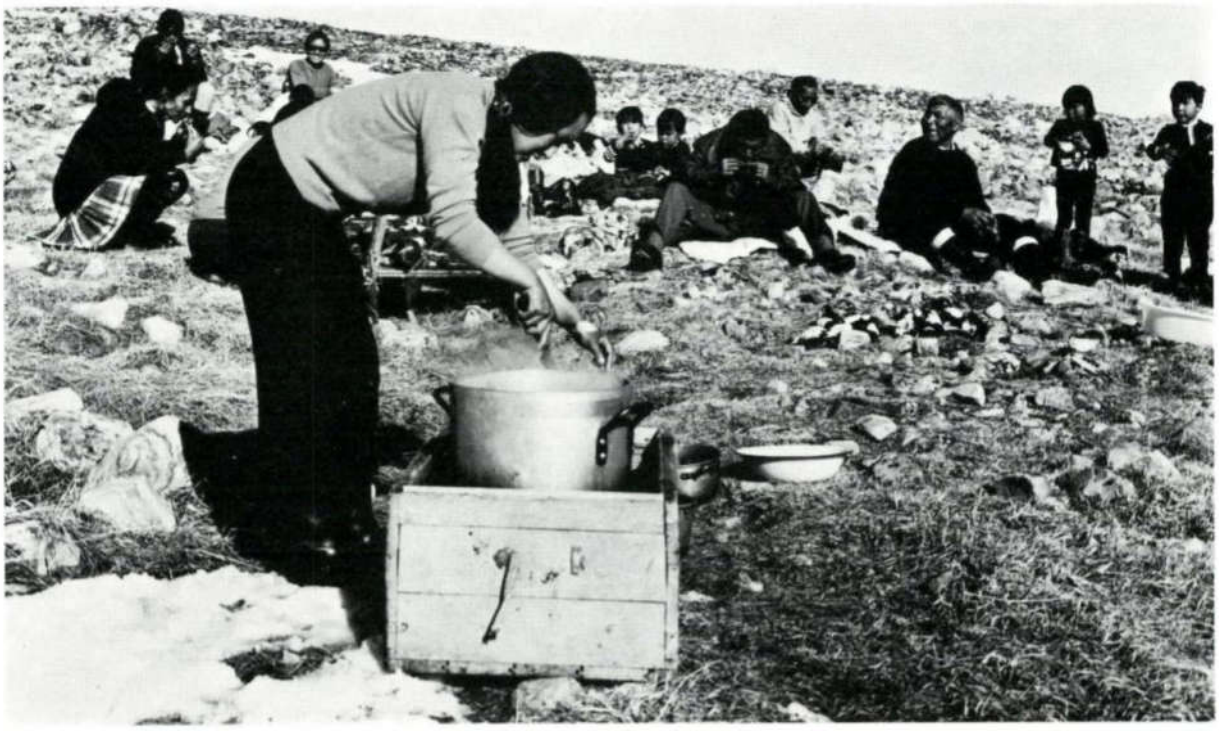
A young mother with a sleeping child on her back scrambles up the breeding slope, her burlap bag half full of birds.

driftwood handle, a hoop of wood or baleen, and netting of sealskin thong or plaited sinew cord. Kane saw a boy, his net pole made of a narwhal tusk, catch 'in a few minutes . . . as many [dovekies] as he could carry.' In the summer of 1855, when Kane and the survivors of his expedition reached Etah, the Eskimos 'fed us and our dogs at the rate of eight thousand birds a week, all of them caught in their little hand nets.'

Now the net's handle is made of wood (often bamboo), the hoop of split cane and the netting of nylon. Apart from this, the annual dovekie hunt proceeds much as it has done for centuries (except that now news of the dovekies' arrival is sent by radio to all Polar Eskimo settlements). The colonies near Savigsivik are exploited nearly exclusively by people from this isolated village. Eskimos from the other settlements concentrate on the colonies near Siorapaluk. Their total annual take (adult birds, eggs, and chicks) is, I think, not less than 200,000 and not more than 400,000. Despite this immense predation, there are now as many dovekies in the Siorapaluk area colonies as there have been in the memory of the oldest people. And there are in the Thule district many other colonies as big, or bigger, which are hardly ever visited by the Eskimos.

In Siorapaluk, I lived with Inuterssuaq, the brother of Peter Freuchen's wife Navarana, and his wife Naduq. Every day, weather permitting, people from Siorapaluk



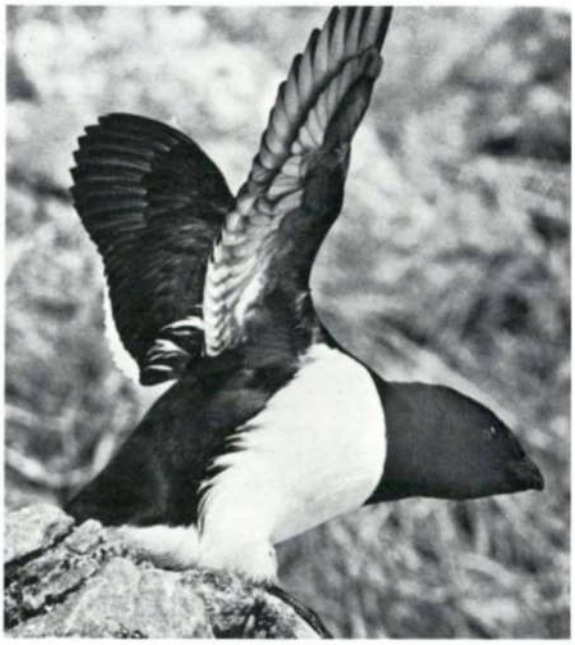


A spring picnic on the dovekie slopes.

and other villages drove by dog team to the nearby dovekie colonies, parked the dogs on the ice at the bottom of the slopes, and climbed cautiously upwards over the treacherously loose rock (in some places the talus slopes reach a height of nearly 1,000 feet). Hidden among rocks, or screened by low bulwarks of rock, some, to judge by lichen encrustation, extremely old, the Eskimos wait for dovekies to fly low across the mountain side. As the birds fly over, the net flicks up, and one or more dovekies are scooped out of the air, pulled in and killed nearly instantaneously by pressing in the chest. A skilful Eskimo (man, woman, and even boys and girls) can catch as many as 300 dovekies a day. Most of the dovekies are eaten fresh, either raw or boiled. The approved fashion is to chew first the fat off the skin (you eat a lot of feathers, until you get the knack of doing it properly) and then to eat the lean meat together with snippets of raw seal or whale blubber (any lean meat, such as hare or bird, is eaten with bits of fat). Until one develops the Eskimos' speed and dexterity in eating the little birds, a dovekie supper tends to be somewhat like a Roman feast of larks and nightingales, long on show and short on substance.

Dovekies caught in fall are kept frozen in shaded caches to be eaten in winter. And each family tries to lay up from three to ten bags of *kiviak,* fermented dovekies, the greatest treat of the Polar Eskimos. For this, seals are skinned by making a circular cut around the tail flippers and another around the neck. With a long knife, the blubber is cut free from the meat, and the entire skin plus blubber is pulled off the seal carcass. One end is sewn shut, some 300 unplucked dovekies are stuffed into the blubber-lined bag, the other end is closed, and it is then covered with a pile of stones, to ripen for about a year. During this fermentation process, the blubber slowly permeates the birds, and when the kiviak is finished, the blubber-marinated dovekies, looking yellowish, have the pungent smell and taste of old Gorgonzola. The feathers come off easily, and the whole bird is eaten, except the bile which tastes vile. The bones have softened; one hammers them to pulp between stones and eats them too. Personally, I think they are somewhat potent as a full-length meal.

When I returned to Siorapaluk in September, the dovekies had left. The mountains seemed still and forlorn without them. Foxes, yapping hoarsely as if they had a bad case of laryngitis, wandered wistfully over the empty slopes, sniffing at the rocks where the dovekies had been all summer, so droll, delightful, and delicious. Now they were safely out at sea, their true realm. The Danes have a lovely name for them. They call them 'søkonger' – the sea kings. ◆

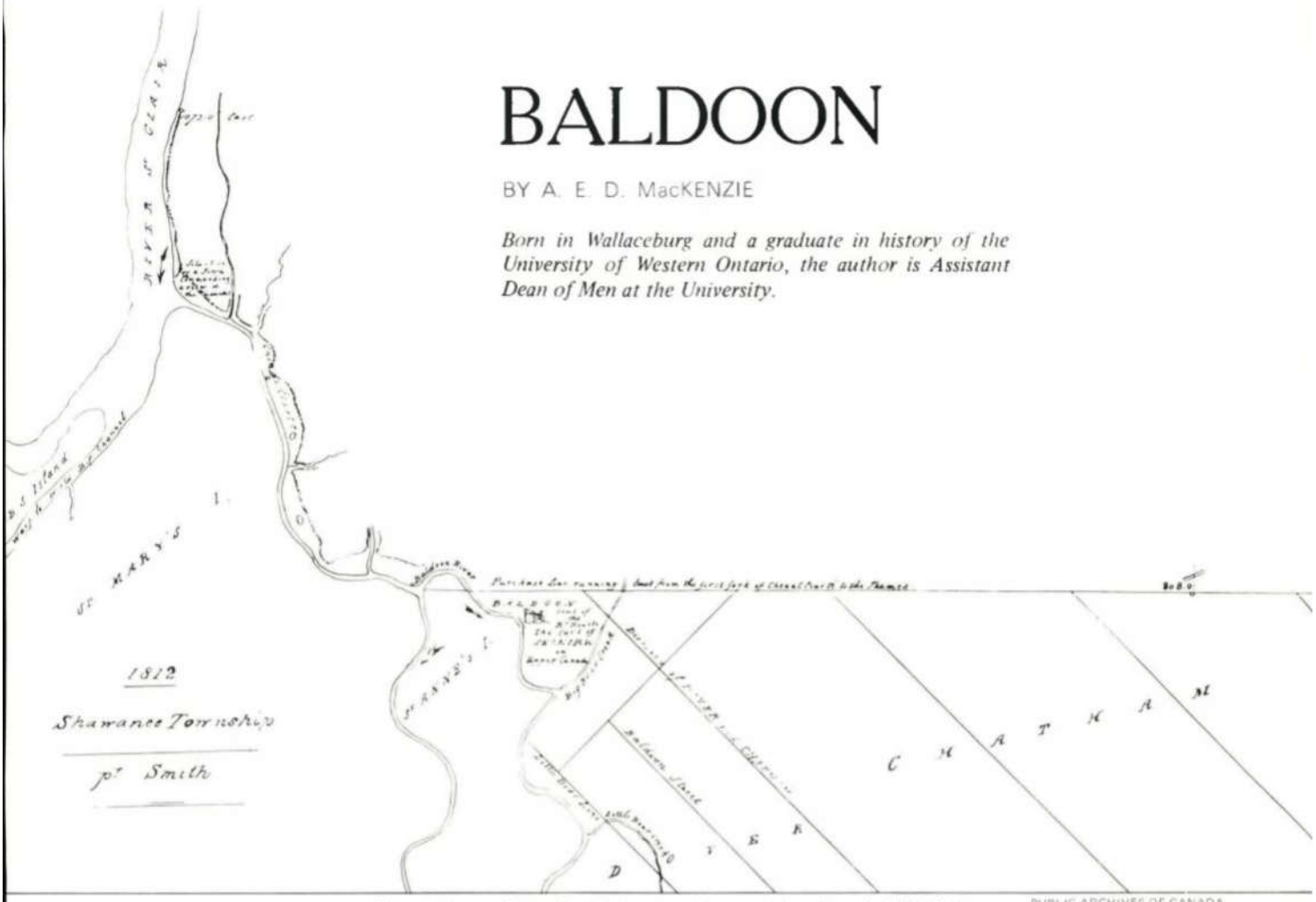


An Eskimo woman descends from the mountain at the end of the day with her net and bag of dovekies. In late August, the birds leave the slopes and fly out to sea.

BALDOON

BY A. E. D. MacKENZIE

Born in Wallaceburg and a graduate in history of the University of Western Ontario, the author is Assistant Dean of Men at the University.



Plan of Shawnee Township (Scale: one mile to an inch), from the Selkirk Papers. PUBLIC ARCHIVES OF CANADA

IN CANADIAN HISTORY, the name Thomas Douglas, fifth Earl of Selkirk, is best remembered as the founder of the Red River Settlement, now Winnipeg. Less well known is his earlier settlement attempt at Baldoon in Dover and Chatham townships, Upper Canada. Selkirk, at the time of his death, viewed his Baldoon experiment as a costly and tragic failure and many writers have generally agreed with his appraisal. John Gray, in his work *Lord Selkirk of Red River* described Baldoon as 'a dead albatross' about Selkirk's neck. The settlement did, in fact, fail to achieve the greatness that Selkirk anticipated; however, his Highland settlers, through perseverance, determination and courage did achieve personal success. The Baldoon settlers and their descendants founded and helped develop the town of Wallaceburg, the second largest municipality in Kent County, and contributed to the development of one of the finest farming areas in eastern North America.

The majority of the fifteen families numbering some 102 persons who came to Baldoon were indentured. In exchange for passage and a fifty acre grant of land, they bound themselves for a set period of time to Selkirk. In his own right, Selkirk received a farm grant of 1,200 acres which the indentured were to work, as well as an additional 200 acres for each family he brought out. His home farm was to be the centre of the settlement and sheep were to be the staple upon which the farm would flourish. Selkirk anticipated eventually wintering a flock of 10,000 to 15,000 with the market for the wool to be found in Albany, New England, Kentucky, Pittsburgh and Lower Canada.

The settlers arrived at Baldoon on 5 September 1804, and were immediately struck by a series of misfortunes from which they never fully recovered. To begin with, the flat, open grasslands which had initially attracted Selkirk soon began to reveal a very serious flaw. Summer rains continued into the fall and the site now lay partially submerged under the flood waters of the Chenail Ecarté and Big Bear Creek. Unfortunately, Selkirk had anticipated a period of warm weather allowing sufficient time for the settlers to build wooden shelters. Nature, however, dictated the terms and the weary Scots were forced to erect makeshift shelters of canvas. The wet, low-lying marshlands proved a fertile breeding ground for the Anopheles mosquito, the carrier of malaria. Rising like grey clouds from the marshes, they served as a constant and agonizing source of irritation. The settlers, weakened from their long

journey, easily fell prey to the mosquito-borne disease. In November 1804, Alexander McDonell, whom Selkirk had hired as farm manager, regrettably reported to Selkirk that fourteen of the original settlers had died. More were to follow. The sickness continued to take its toll as twenty-two settlers, including eight of the original fifteen heads of families died by November of 1805.

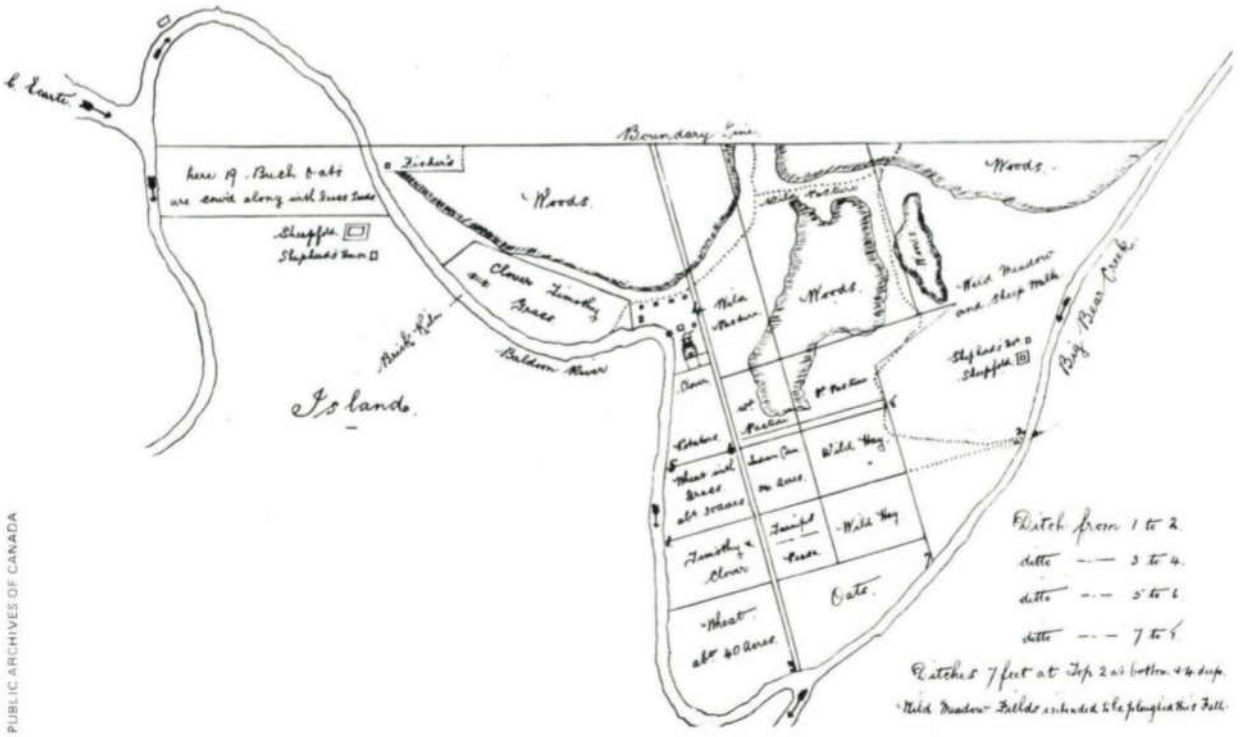
The most important single cause of the early misfortunes lay in the site itself. All other factors, although important, were secondary. Selkirk possessed considerable expertise on land selection and had already successfully established a colony in Prince Edward Island, but he was a man far ahead of his time. The Chenail Ecarté flat lands have proven to be one of the finest agricultural areas in Canada but without the benefits of modern dredging techniques and tile drainage the settlers could not meet the challenges proffered by the local environment. Selkirk endeavoured to minimize the flooding conditions through a series of instructions to build drainage channels; however, they were inadequate for the task at hand.

Although the site proved to be the overwhelming cause for the settlers' misfortunes, Selkirk's plans and the settlers' aspirations were further thwarted by the incompetent management of Alexander McDonell. McDonell's insatiable appetite for security and self-esteem took precedence over the administration of the colony for the record shows quite clearly that he spent more time at York (now Toronto) in search of higher office than he did at Baldoon. Evidence of this is seen in McDonell's attempt in 1807 to quit his agency with Selkirk in order to secure the Receivership of the Province. When he failed to obtain this appointment the uncomfortable thought of being without a tangible source of income induced him to make the best of his position with Selkirk. His enthusiasm for Baldoon increased as his hopes for other employment diminished. The settlers whom he had previously described as 'a strange set, and not unlike our neighbours the Chippewas and Ottawas in their inordinate love of whisky and filthiness', became 'the finest looking young men' in Upper Canada.

In addition to the initial disasters, the sheep which were to be the mainstay of the fledgling community fared poorly in the early years. They suffered repeated attacks of scab and were in constant danger from rattlesnakes and roving packs of wolves. The colony experienced further hardships in the opening hostilities of the War of 1812.

Captain Robert Forsyth, in July 1812, commanding a small U.S. militia unit, pillaged the homes of the settlers, as well as the home farm. He returned to Sandwich, then occupied by the Americans under General Hull, with 'a small herd of cattle, nearly 1,000 sheep, and accompanied by the settlement's large boat and ten small ones laden with grain, flour and other booty'. The fortunes of

Baldoon Farm: Selkirk papers.



PUBLIC ARCHIVES OF CANADA

Baldoon rose and fell with British fortunes on the Detroit River. The capture of Detroit by Brock led to the return of the majority of the sheep, but a number had been killed and eaten by the army.

Selkirk's interest in Baldoon waned as he became more deeply involved in his latest settlement venture at Red River. The practical application of his theories on emigration and settlement at Baldoon had proven unsettling and far too expensive. The indenture system was an obvious expense. The sickness, death and temporary evacuation of his settlers engendered a greater dependency of the indentured on the goodwill of Selkirk. The Earl was not one to shirk his responsibilities and as a result incurred large financial losses. He vowed not to employ the same system at Red River.

Following the War of 1812, the Baldoon farm was leased to a William Jones and in September 1818, partially to meet the rising costs of his Red River experiment, Selkirk sold the farm to John McNab for approximately £2,225.

With the sale of the farm, Selkirk's biographers end the story of Baldoon. Consequently, Selkirk's experiment has usually been described as an ill-fated venture and a failure, having played a relatively insignificant role in the growth of Kent and Lambton Counties. The settlers, however, did not simply fade away but rather, when thrown on their own resources, not only survived but prospered. They clung stubbornly to their fifty-acre lots on Big Bear Creek until the Shawnee Township which abutted the boundary line of Selkirk's home farm was thrown open for settlement in 1822.

The first Baldoon settler to take advantage of land in the Shawnee Township was Laughlan McDougall who settled on lot 13, second concession of the township, now known as Chatham Gore. Laughlan's property was located at the forks of Big Bear Creek, approximately two miles upstream from his original holdings under Selkirk, and he thus became Wallaceburg's first settler.

McDougall opened a multi-purpose building which served as a trading post, tavern and dwelling place and later opened a hostelry across the street, which became famous 'for its three cent swipes of whisky, and from the effects of which not a few free brawls were instituted'. The McDougalls were well known for their pugilistic nature.

In 1834, Laughlan launched the schooners *Wallace* and *Selkirk*, the first of many ships to be built at Wallaceburg. It is of interest that Selkirk in his early instructions to McDonell suggested that the Baldoon settlement would need the services of a 'shallop' and felt that the McDougalls, with a good shipwright to superintend them, could handle the project and that Allan McDougall could serve as captain.

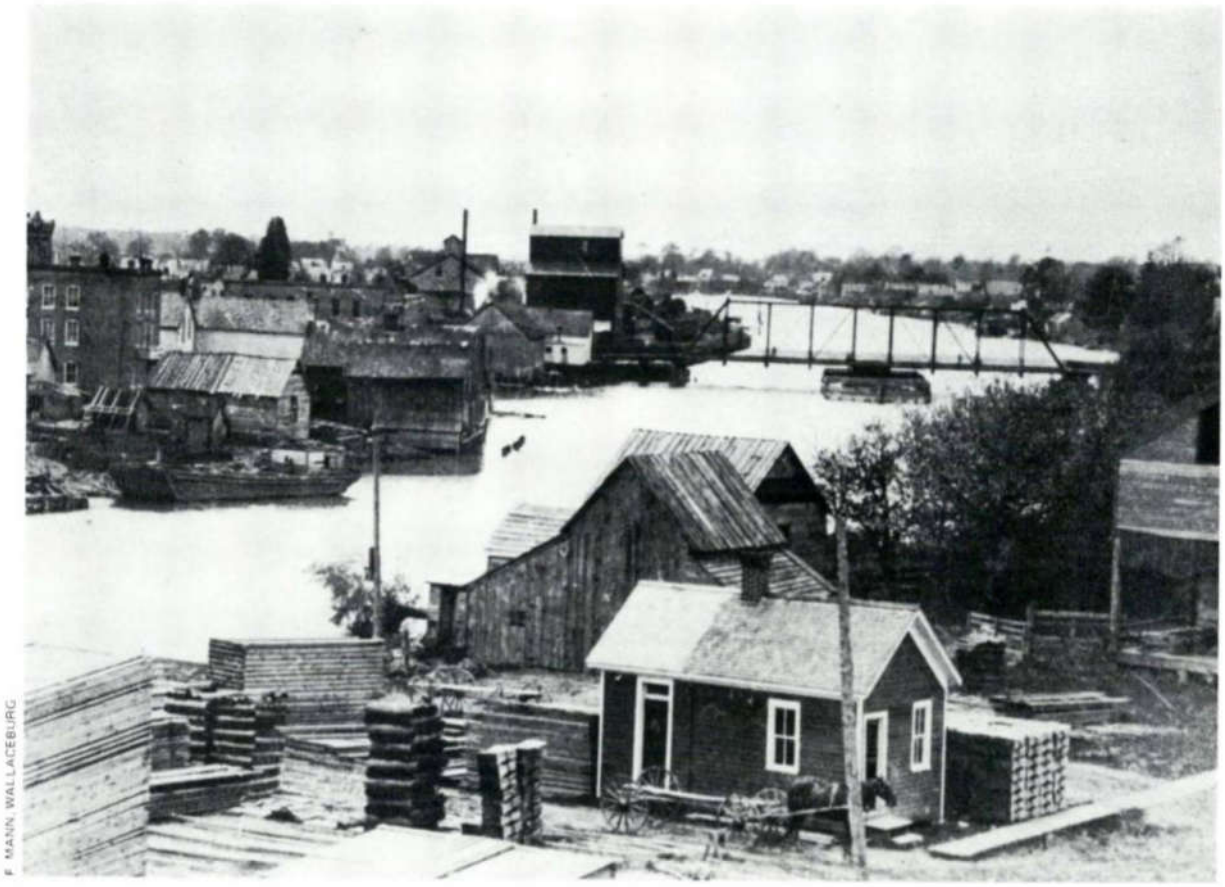
Archibald and Hector McDougall soon followed their brother's lead and took up land across the river from Laughlan on the north side of Big Bear Creek, where they eventually established a flourishing lumber business. The first registered cemetry in Wallaceburg, known as the McDougall Cemetery, was later established on this side of the river and today is marked by a simple cairn.

Alexander McDougall, a nephew of Laughlan, became the local attorney in 1857. He built an office on the site of his uncle's hostelry which had been destroyed by fire. Alexander gained local notoriety for his strict enforcement of the Canada Temperance Act, 1878. Apparently, many of his fellow Scotsmen with their fondness for whisky, objected quite vigorously to the strict application of the law as enforced by McDougall. The most belligerent attitude was that expressed by the local hotel owners who found themselves in constant danger of being closed down. Things came to a head when the hotel owners burned McDougall's office to the ground. Although McDougall later had them brought to trial, they were never convicted. The outlines of the office foundations can still be seen today in front of the apartment occupied by Alexander's granddaughter, Freda McDougall.

The McDougalls were soon joined by other Baldoon settlers and their descendants. The McLeans, McDonalds, Morrisons, Buchanans, and McCallums established themselves as prosperous farmers and businessmen. Hugh McCallum secured from the Crown, lot 12 in the 2nd concession and opened a one-room schoolhouse. In 1834, he became the settlement's first postmaster. The settlement, then known as 'The Forty Thieves' and 'The Forks', eventually adopted the name Hugh gave to the post office – Wallaceburgh – in honour of Sir William Wallace, Scotland's great patriot. The name was later shortened to Wallaceburg.

As the community grew in size, the business and industrial interests kept pace. The Baldoon descendants performed valuable services as town councillors, teachers, lawyers, businessmen and as members of various civic and county boards. The full impact of the Baldoon settlers and their descendants can never be fully measured; however, Wallaceburg's earliest beginnings and development rest to an overwhelming extent upon the courage and spirit of the Selkirk settlers in the face of so many hardships.

Not all took up residence at The Forks. To a large extent they took to homesteading in the immediate area where they contributed greatly to the development of the agricultural economy of the region. One such settler was Angus McDonald who first apprenticed himself to a tannery in Amherstburg. Following his apprenticeship he took up land a short distance north of the original Baldoon home farm on the St. Clair River. This property today consists of a large part of the village of Port Lambton. Through necessity, he became Sombra township's first schoolteacher, building a small log cabin next to his home where he taught his many children. In later years many of his neighbours started sending their



F. MANN, WALLACEBURG

Wallaceburg, c. 1885, the view from the north bank of Big Bear Creek, looking west.

children to Angus to be taught reading, writing, and arithmetic.

Donald Taylor McDonald and his family moved a distance upstream on the Chenail Ecarté where he received in 1824 a grant of land being lot B of the 4th concession. John McDonald, eldest son of Donald, received in 1826 a grant of land in lot A, 4th concession. It was on this lot that John built a home which became the focus of the 'Baldoon Mystery'. The Baldoon ghost or poltergeist caused tables to fly through the air, fires to appear and disappear and other strange phenomena. The McDonalds for a short period of time enjoyed great notoriety as hundreds of curious people came long distances with the hope of seeing the poltergeist at work. The Baldoon Mystery created sufficient interest to be headlined in the Detroit *Gazette* of 1829. This wider publicity later induced the White Star Steamship Line to include as a special tourist attraction a side trip up the Chenail Ecarté past the haunted house. Frank Mann, a long-time resident of the area and an amateur historian believes that the happenings began as the result of a feud between the Buchanan family and the McDonalds. It was only a short time after John McDonald refused to sell his property to a member of the Buchanan family that the phenomena occurred. The canny McDonalds used these happenings to advantage and the McDonald home became an early tourist attraction.

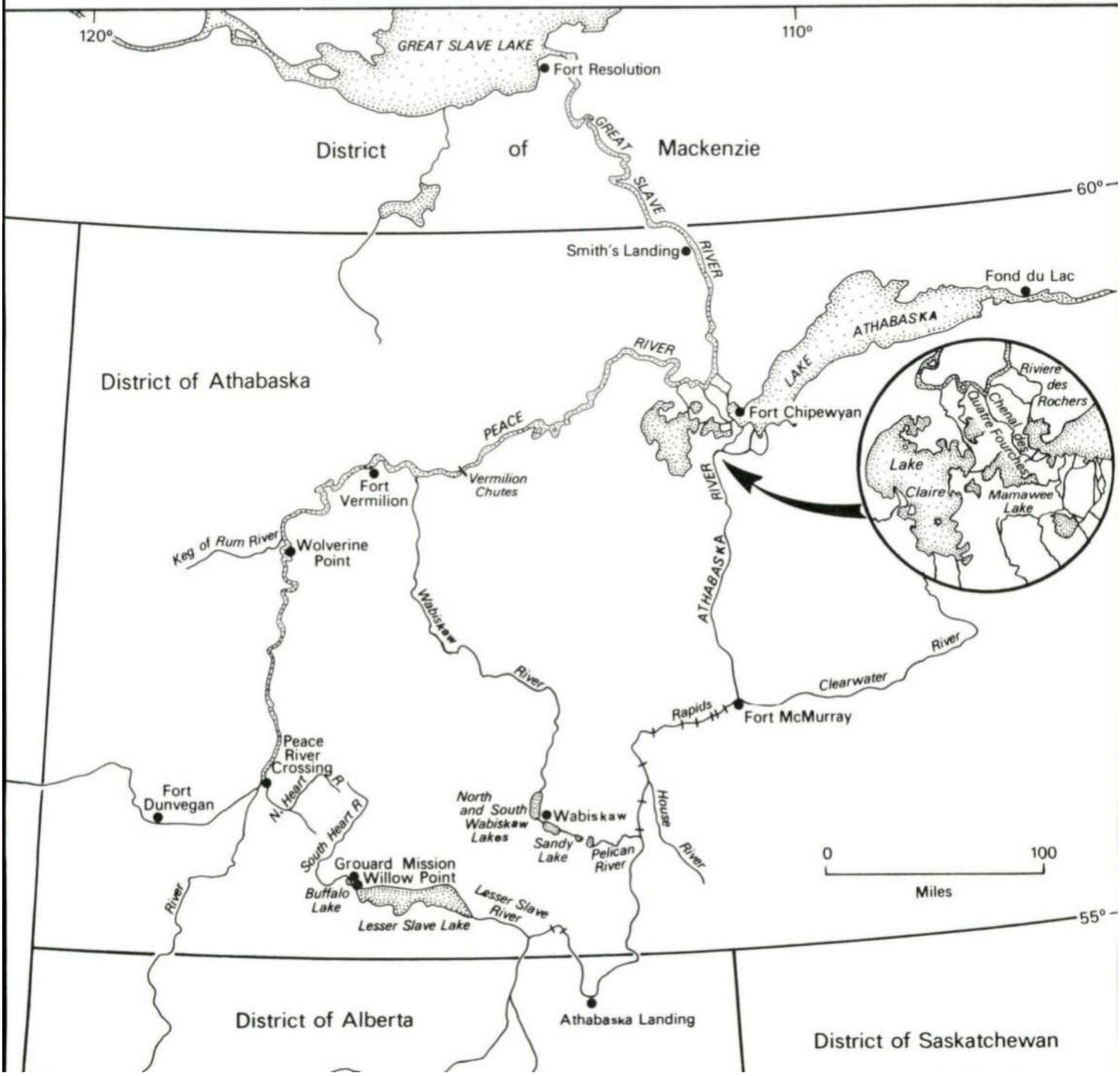
The foregoing record of the families is by no means exhaustive. Other Baldoon families such as the Browns, Buchanans, McKenzies and Morrisons stayed in the area and made significant contributions to the economic and social life of the region. The contributions of the Baldoon settlers to Wallaceburg and to Kent and Lambton Counties can best be expressed in the words of the present Lord Selkirk, who visited Wallaceburg on 27 July 1967. He pointed out that Thomas Douglas, the fifth Earl of Selkirk, in establishing the settlement showed the possibilities and importance of emigration. The settlers, he stated, although hard hit by malarial fever, crop failures and poor management revealed the high degree of resolution, determination and courage which enabled them to overcome these difficulties and make the experiment a success. ◆

INLAND JOURNEY

BY J. W. CHALMERS

Dr Chalmers is associate professor of educational history, University of Alberta

Treaty No. 8, put forward in 1899 and signed by various northern Indian bands, called for laying aside reserves not to exceed one square mile for each family of five. These lands were never chosen. In August this year, Indian Affairs Minister Jean Chrétien announced that a negotiated settlement of the treaty will now be sought. This article describes the 1899 journey of the Indian Treaty Commission into the District of Athabaska as it was then called.

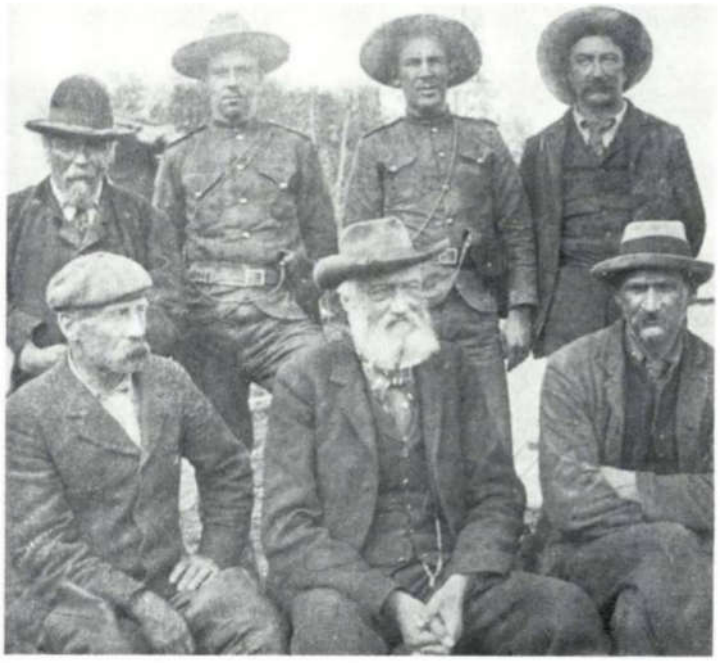


ONE JUNE NIGHT in 1899, fifty men were gathered around their camp-fire on the bank of the Lesser Slave River. They were celebrating the fiftieth anniversary of an old priest's appointment as missionary to the North-west Territories. Regardless of faith, police officer and government functionary united with Indian and Métis to pay tribute to the veteran Father Albert Lacombe. French Secretary of the Scrip Commission J. F. Prud-homme presented him 'with a suitable address, hand-somely engrossed . . . on birchbark and signed by the whole party', while J. A. Côté, of the Ottawa Land Department, read a poem he had composed, and pre-sented Father Lacombe with a copy, also written on bark. After the Father replied, he proceeded, over a good cigar, to relate many stories of his work in the North.

The wayfarers on that happy occasion consisted of two associated parties. The first group, headed by the Honourable David Laird, were on their way north to negotiate Indian Treaty No. 8, which concerned the aboriginal title to what is now the northern half of Alberta and large areas in present-day British Columbia, Saskatchewan, and the Northwest Territories. The other party, led by Major James Walker, a retired officer of the Royal North-West Mounted Police, constituted the Half-Breed Scrip Commission, whose work began where that of the first Commission ended. They were charged with securing concurrence of the Métis to the terms of the treaty through issuance of scrip redeemable in land or cash.

The auxiliary personnel accompanying the two Com-missions included Bishop E. Grouard, a guest, and Father Lacombe, advisor to the Treaty Commission.

Keenooshayo (The Fish) addresses the Treaty Commission at Willow Point. At the right is Head of the Commission, the Honourable David Laird, seated, centre. To his left is H. B. Round of the Hudson's Bay Company who was responsible for travel arrangements and on his right, one of the Commission's secretaries, Harrison Young. Standing with two RNWMP constables, is interpreter Pierre d'Eschambault (left) and Camp Manager Henry McKay.



There were also boatmen, cooks, a medical officer, an interpreter, a transportation manager borrowed from the Hudson's Bay Company, and a detachment of the Royal North-West Mounted Police.

English Secretary of the Scrip Commission was Charles Mair, then 61 years old, who chronicled the inland voyage in his book *Through the Mackenzie Basin*. He is virtually forgotten today, but then he was well known as a playwright and poet. At Red River in 1870, as chief lieutenant to Dr John Schultz, he was captured by Louis Riel's provisional government and sentenced to death. Nothing so prosaic as a pardon or amnesty saved him; he escaped by breaking out of prison. Before and after this episode, he came close to death by drowning, freezing, and prairie fire.

His careers were as varied as his adventures, and continued until he was well into his eighties, when he was superannuated as a Western Canada immigration agent. By the time he reached the Athabasca country, he had written his thin book of thin poems and his unplayable drama *Tecumseh;* he had been journalist, unsuccessful politician, merchant, farmer, land speculator, civil servant, and briefly a soldier during the 1885 Rebellion.

Always warm-hearted, he had been in his younger days bumptious and insensitive, impulsive and tactless. Now the aging wanderer was setting forth on what he perhaps hoped would be one last adventure.

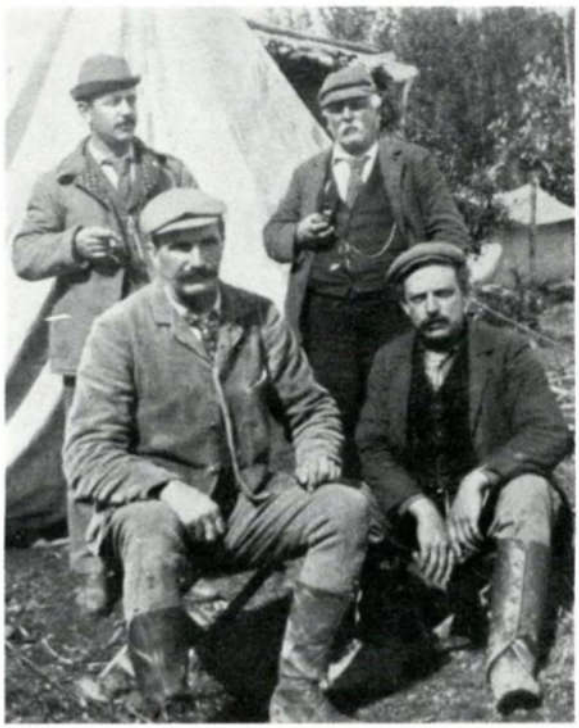
The party left Athabasca Landing on 3 June and began their wearisome ascent of the Athabasca River. Progress for the little squadron, consisting of two scows and a York boat, was desperately slow. The current was too rapid for rowing, so the boats had to be towed or tracked up-stream, the men serving as draught animals. As Mair indicates:

> This was no light matter for men unaccustomed to such beastly toil and in such abominable weather; but, having once put their hands to the rope, they were not the men to back down. With unfaltering 'go' they pulled on day after day, landing their boat at its destination at last, having worked in the harness and at the sweeps, without relief, from the start almost to the finish.

An old Indian named Peokus headed the line of police officers. Mair describes him as clothed in pants, shirt and corduroy vest 'toned down to the colour of the grime', an Assomption sash; and a handkerchief around his head. Short and squarely built, on the lead in harness he swung his long arms like pendulums and his whole body was bent forward at an acute angle. The constables must often have cursed the tirelessness of their leader.

Slowly, day after day the party pressed towards its goal: up the Athabasca to the mouth of the Lesser Slave River, and up that river to Lesser Slave Lake, where for the first time they were able to use sails. Moving on open water until 19 June, the men reached the settlement of Willow Point, at the head of the lake.

Three miles north of Willow Point lay beautiful little Buffalo Lake. There a second village had grown up, the site of present-day Grouard Mission. Since each community was intensely jealous of the other, the Commissioners, with fine impartiality, located their camp precisely half way between them.



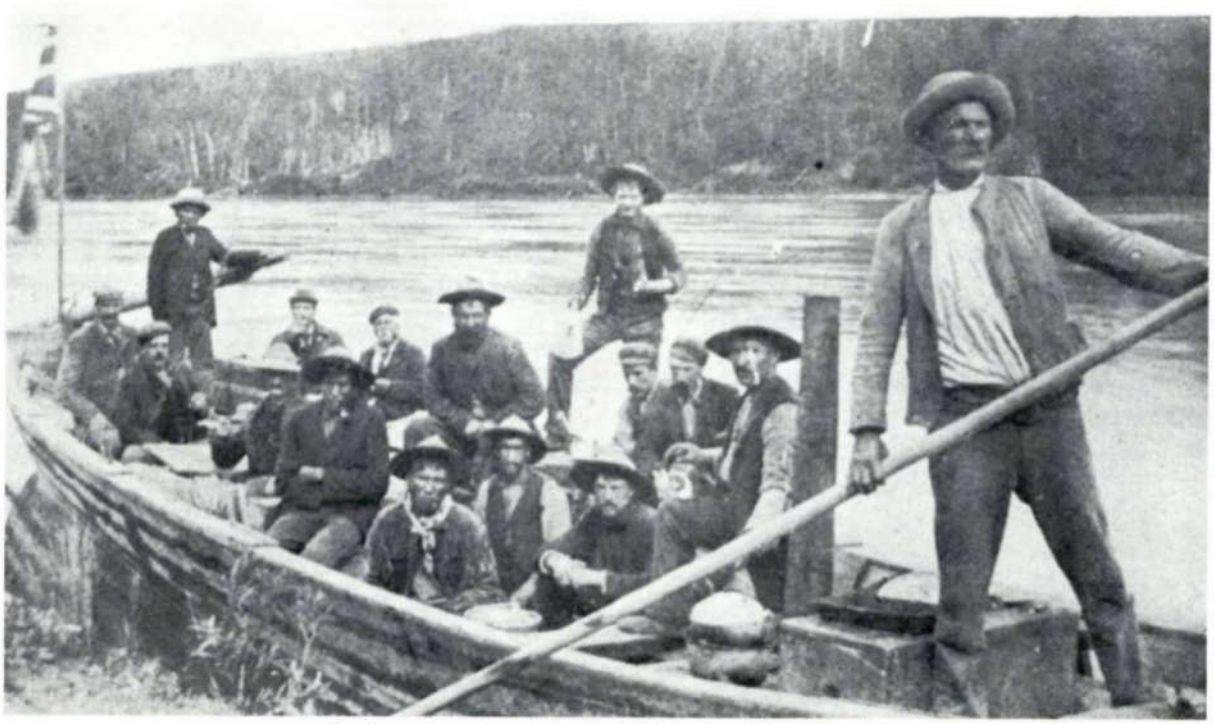
Members of the Scrip Commission: Major James Walker and J. A. Côté, and standing, Secretaries J. F. Prudhomme and Charles Mair.

> Tepees were to be seen in all directions from our camp – the lodges of the Indians and half-breeds. But no sooner was the treaty site apparent than a general concentration took place, and we were speedily surrounded by a bustling crowd, putting up trading tents and shacks, dancing booths, eating-places, etc., so that with the motley crowd, including a large number of women and children, and a swarm of dogs such as we never dreamt of, amounting in a short space to over a thousand, we were in the heart of life and movement and noise.

Mair could not help comparing these natives with those he had known twenty to thirty years previously, when Indian Treaties Nos. 1 to 7 had been negotiated. Absent were the paint and feathers, the scalp lock, the breechclout and buffalo robe. The men were respectable-looking, well dressed in 'store-clothes', with unpainted faces and 'combed and common' hair.

The negotiations, which began at 2 o'clock in the afternoon on 20 June were also different.

> Instead of fiery oratory and pipes of peace – the stone calumets of old – the vigorous arguments, the outbursts of passion, and close calls from threatened violence, here was a gathering of commonplace men smoking briar-roots, with treaty tobacco instead of "weed", and whose chiefs replied to Mr. Laird's explanations and offers in a few brief and sensible statements, varied by vigorous appeals to the common sense and judgment, rather than the passions, of their people.



The Scrip Commission's boat with Steersman Pierre Cyr, then over seventy, at the bow.

The Treaty Commissioners also noted the differences between the Plains Indians and their new clients. Of the latter, they reported:

> They indulge in neither paint nor feathers, and never clothe themselves in blankets. Their dress is of the ordinary style and many of them were well clothed. In the summer they live in teepees, but many of them have log houses in which they live in winter.
>
> There was a marked absence of the old Indian style of oratory. Only among the Wood Crees were any formal speeches made, and these were brief.

All Métis were eligible to receive scrip if they or their forefathers had not done so previously in Manitoba or elsewhere. To ensure that they had not, the secretaries had to check each name, together with date and place of birth. Since the Métis had not wholly abandoned the Indian practice of changing their names at appropriate times, this checking was a slow process. Family and occasionally, given names were formidable. Some which Mair noted were Mishoostiquan, Waupunékapow, and Kanawatchaguáyo.

Dates and places of birth gave even more difficulty. How does one record the birthdate of a child who was born in *Meeksuo pesim* – the month when the eagles return – February; or a long time ago in *Oghpaho pesim* – the month when the birds begin to fly – August? However, the birthday of one old lady, Catherine Bisson, was well remembered, since she had been born on New Year's Day 106 years before. 'She was now blind, and was partly led, partly carried into our tent – a small, thin, wizened woman, with keen features and a tongue as keen, which cackled and joked at a great rate with the crowd around her.'

And how could one identify places of birth when even the people themselves did not know them? Despite the opportunities for chicanery which unsatisfactory records provided, Mair states that there was not one clear case of attempted fraud among all the Lesser Slave Lake Métis.

Distribution of treaty money and scrip made for a gala time. Traders' booths and refreshment tents, dispensing ginger ale and cigars, were thronged, and in lodges 'improvised from aspen saplings', many spent the night in gambling. For Mair the chief attractions were the two dancing floors, walled and roofed with saplings. Here, comely brunettes in braids and moccasins served as tireless partners to consummate masters of step-dancing. Different steps were performed, but none more enthusiastically than the traditional Red River Jig.

On 12 July, the work at Slave Lake completed, the Scrip Commission moved overland to Peace River Crossing, which was reached on 15 July.

> The view up the Peace River from the high prairie level is singularly beautiful, the river disclosing a series of reaches, like inland lakes, far to the west, whilst from the south comes the immense valley of the Heart, and, farther up, the Smoky River, a great tributary which drains a large extent of prairie country mixed with timber.

From the Crossing, the Commissioners proceeded to Fort Dunvegan, where a number of Métis were awaiting them. On 18 July, after travelling 'partly on horseback and partly by waggon' through a parkland carpeted with ripe strawberries and flowers – mignonette, lupin, and phlox – they made their descent to the edge of the river. The historic H B C fort, originally established by the North West Company around 1805, consisted of two buildings. East of it the Roman Catholic Mission with its garden of peas and potatoes and its fields of wheat, appeared to be flourishing; yet within four years it was to be abandoned.

The Dunvegan visit gave Mair a chance to meet an old man who, sixty years before, had canoed with Governor George Simpson. He also met a party of four Americans rafting down the Peace after an unsuccessful effort to reach the Klondike and make their fortunes.

Returning to the Crossing, the poet found himself surrounded by fur trade history. Forts belonging to the Hudson's Bay, North West, and X Y Companies had been located in the immediate neighbourhood. The owner of a mill and a farm nearby was a namesake and collateral descendant of Sir Alexander Mackenzie. Like his father, this man had served the Honourable Company, joining it in 1861 and reaching the rank of Chief Trader before retirement.

After completing their work at the Crossing the task force started down the great but placid Peace River. Now the current did most of the work, assisted only occasionally by a stroke of the sweeps or steering oar.

The party left Peace River Crossing on 24 July, and two days later arrived at the Métis settlement of Wolverine Point (now Carcajou), 'a dismal hamlet of six or seven cabins, with a graveyard in their midst'. The voyageurs passed the Keg of Rum and Paddle Rivers, names redolent of the fur trade, and swung east towards Fort Vermilion. The party's arrival, on 26 July, was 'beneath a waning moon, in the south, and an exquisite array of gold and scarlet clouds in the east, which dyed the whole river a delicate red'.

Fort Vermilion was an oasis of civilization. The visitors spent Sunday 30 July, at the farm home of Erastus Lawrence, who had 110 acres of wheat ripening before his front window. After service in the Anglican church, all returned to the Lawrence home for an excellent dinner, which included home-cured ham, fresh eggs, butter, and cream. Their quarters were in the substantial H B C fort, which was in the charge of a Mr F. D. Wilson, son-in-law 'of my old friend, Chief-factor Clarke, of Prince Albert'. This comment is disingenuous. In 1880, in the correspondence columns of the Saskatchewan *Herald*, Mair and Lawrence Clarke had engaged in a most intemperate controversy.

Fort Dunvegan a year after the Roman Catholic Mission was abandoned. The Company post remained open until 1918.

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Quite obviously, Mair rather envied the tranquil life at Fort Vermilion, where books, music, cards, and dances served to fill the leisure hours, and where the occasional wedding celebrations lasted for days. But more important than any of these was 'sport, in a region abounding with game of all kinds'.

As always, Mair sought out the old-timers. At Fort Vermilion he found another of Simpson's fellow-voyageurs, who had travelled with the Little Emperor fifty-five years previously. Another ancient survivor was King Beaulieu, whose father in 1820 had sketched a map to the Coppermine River for John Franklin, R.N.

After the travellers left the Fort, they soon came to the Vermilion Chutes, a series of rapids which are the only obstruction to navigation in six hundred miles. Mair walked around Meâtina Pôwistik (The Real Rapid), where the heavy York boats had to be portaged, but preferred the excitement of riding the lightened craft through Nepegabakétik (Where the Water Falls). Soon they reached the Peace-Athabasca delta, where a complicated system of streams and lakes constitutes the mouths of these two great rivers. From the Peace they turned into the Chenal des Quatre Fourches to reach Lake Athabasca, and were soon at Fort Chipewyan.

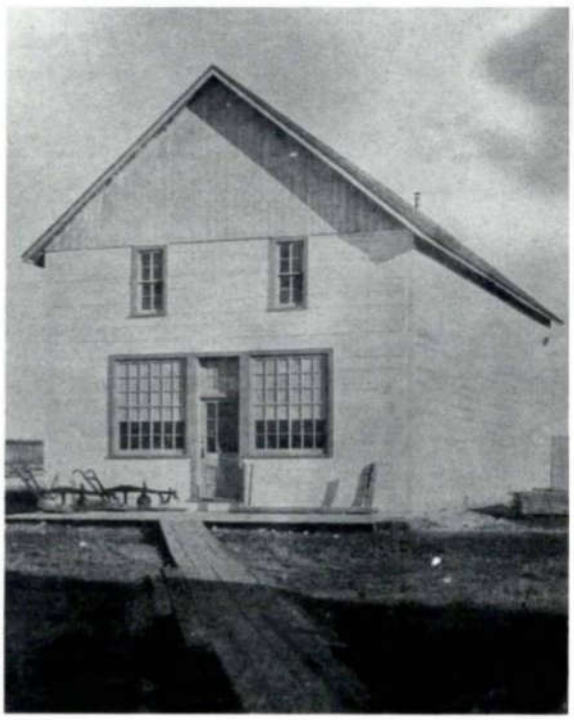
Established by the North West Company in 1788, Fort Chipewyan is one of the oldest settled communities in Alberta. At the time of Mair's visit, the Fort's original buildings had long since been replaced by those built by Chief Factor Roderick MacFarlane in the 1870s. The traditional bastioned palisade evident in George Back's 1820 sketch had shrunk to a vestigial, largely symbolic fence and gateway.

Since the Commission spent several days at Fort Chipewyan, Mair was able to immerse himself in its history and anthropology. He was obviously delighted to visit Colin Fraser, son of Sir George Simpson's piper, and to handle the old man's pipes, the very ones, he thought, that had heralded the arrival of the Governor at the forts some seventy years before. He also found another relic:

> East of the fort are shelving masses of red granite, completely covered by a dark orange lichen, which gives them an added warmth and richness; and on the highest part stood a square lead sun-dial, which, at first sight, I thought had surely been set up by Franklin or Richardson, but which I was told was very modern indeed, and put up, if I am not mistaken, by Mr. Ogilvie, D.L.S.

A belief which Mair unearthed among the natives was the conviction that the mastodon still roamed the Upper Mackenzie, an area where naturally they feared to venture.

In the course of their duties, the two Commissions made two side trips from Fort Chipewyan. One was to Fond du Lac, near the eastern end of Lake Athabasca. The other sortie was to the south shore of Great Slave Lake. By 9 August, all their business was completed, and they resumed their journey in the comparative luxury of a steamer. Three or four days later they reached the mouth of the Clearwater and Fort McMurray, a decrepit cabin and a trading store. From there the two Commissions had to continue their ascent of the swift Athabasca by the slow toil of tracking their boats.



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The H B C store at Fort Vermilion as it was in 1899.

Mair was impressed by the Fort McMurray tar sands:

> In the neighbourhood of McMurray there are several tar-wells, so called, and there, if a hole is scraped in the bank, it slowly fills in with tar mingled with sand. This is separated by boiling, and is used, in its native state, for gumming canoes and boats. Farther up are immense towering banks, the tar oozing at every pore, and underlaid by great overlapping dykes of disintegrated limestone. . . .
> The tar. . . is a fuel, and burned in our camp-fires like coal. That this region is stored with a substance of great economic value is beyond all doubt, and, when the hour of development comes, it will, I believe, prove to be one of the wonders of Northern Canada.

Soon the travellers were busy climbing no fewer than ten rapids. At Brulé Rapid, Mair found time to note the scenery:

> Above this rapid the bank consists of a solid, vertical rampart of red sandstone, its base and top and every crack and crevice clothed with a rich vegetation – a most beautiful and striking scene, forming a gigantic amphitheatre, concentred by the seeming closing-in of the left bank at Point Brulé upon the long straight line of sandstone wall on the right. Nothing finer, indeed, could be imagined in all this remarkable river's remarkable scenery than this impressive view. . .

An Indian family at Wabasca Lake with a catch of whitefish hung out to dry.

Near the same place he was interested to note three lobsticks – 'lop-sticks' he called them – made of tall spruce trees denuded of all branches except a few at top and bottom. Each *piskoōtenusk* is made in honour of some individual, as Mair himself had been honoured in Manitoba some forty years before. Another noteworthy phenomenon was a burning gas vent near the water's edge, with a thirty-inch flame which had been active 'time out of mind'. The gas was also bubbling or foaming for several yards out into the river.

It was at Brulé Rapid that the parties enjoyed the Sabbath on 19 August, with the voyageurs delighting in their beloved games and the officials writing letters. A little rain fell during the day, but at night it cleared and the full moon gleaming over the water and the boatmen lounging around the fires created a picturesque scene.

A more melancholy and ghost-haunted spot was the Point at the mouth of the House River. The site was deserted, but a few decaying cabins showed it had once been inhabited. Protected by little tents of greying cotton, several Indian graves marked the last resting places of a man, his wife, and their four children, who had died together of diphtheria in that lonely spot. But there had been more gruesome deaths. Here an Iroquois turned *wendigo*, or cannibal, had murdered and eaten a priest. Then the lunatic captured an Indian girl and carried her off to the depths of the forest. After cohabiting with her for some time, he had killed and devoured her also. Pursued by members of her tribe, he committed suicide. As the visitors left the spot, 'the melancholy Point with its lonely graves, deserted cabins and cannibal legend receded into eerie distance and wrapped itself once more in congenial solitude.'

On 29 August, the two Commissions parted company at the mouth of the Pelican River. The Treaty party had previously secured adhesion of the Cree to the Treaty at Wabasca (then Wabiskaw), which Mair insists is more correctly spelled Wahpooskow and means Grassy Narrows. Laird and his group continued up-river to Athabasca Landing and so home, but the Scrip Commission still had to treat with the Wabasca Métis.

Beginning 29 August, they set out in light canoes, ascended the Pelican, crossed to Sandy Lake, and descended the Wabasca to South and North Wabasca Lakes, which they reached about 2 September. Mair was entranced.

> We were now in close contact with the most innocently wild, secluded, and apparently happy state of things imaginable. . . Here was contentment in the savage wilderness – communion with Nature in all her unstained purity and beauty.

Every Indian cabin on the lakefront had its patch of potatoes, 'making our mouths water with expectation, for we had now been a long time without them'. Both Roman Catholic and Anglican missionaries were active in the community. The latter's garden included corn, and wheat in stooks and untouched by frost, while his poultry, pigs, and cows attested to his knowledge of

husbandry. The Hudson's Bay Company had established a post, and there was also a free trader close by. Another trader was on hand with a supply of goods to separate the Métis from their scrip.

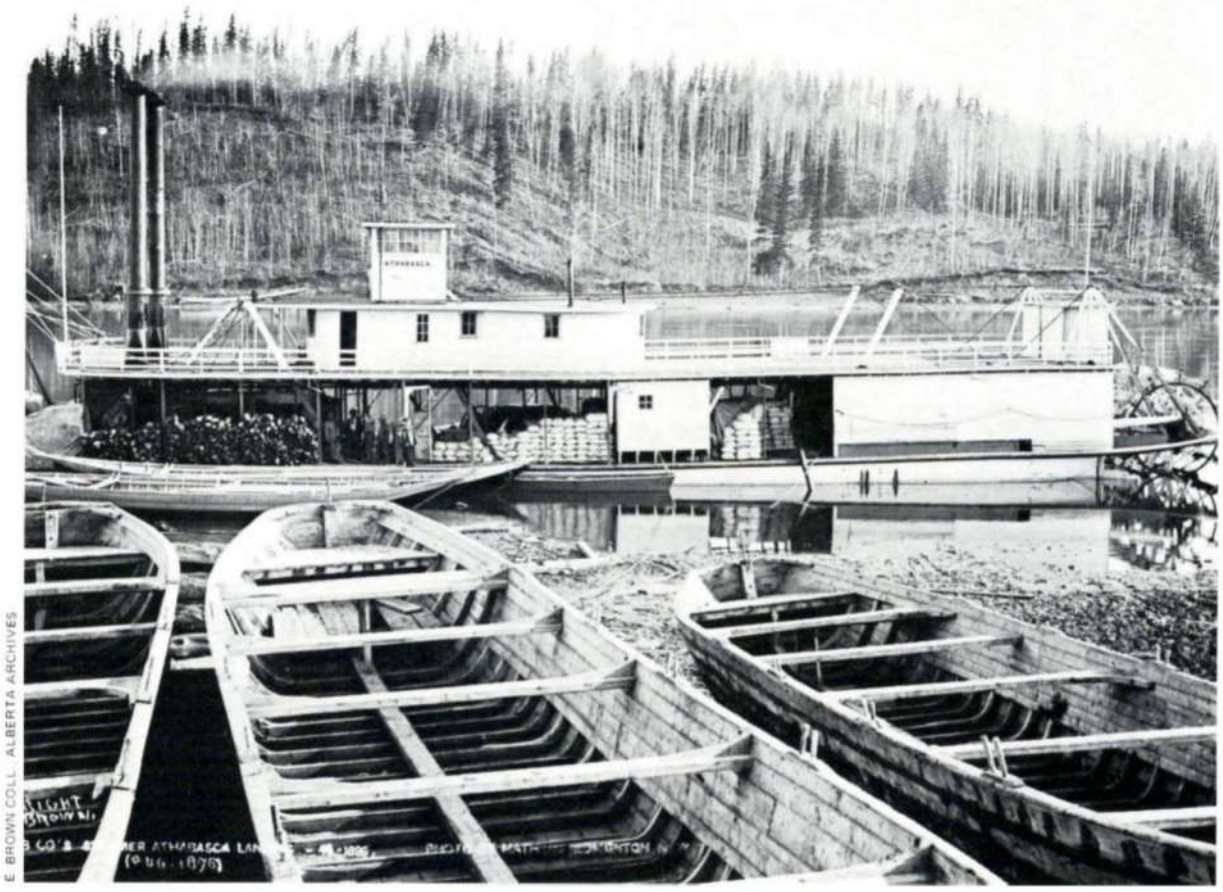
One night, after an excellent dinner, Mair attended a 'breakdown' in a solid log hall. The two fiddlers performed for a crowd of Métis: 'of elders, youths, girls and matrons, the latter squatting on the floor with their babes in moss-bags, dividing the delights of the evening between nursing and dancing, both of which were conducted with the utmost propriety.' Mair was pleased with the fiddling and dancing; the men showed an admirable variety of steps and the women 'stooped their shoulders gracefully and bent their brows modestly upon the floor'. But, traditionalist that he was, he did not look with favour upon a local variation of the Red River Jig

With their business completed, all that remained was for the Scrip Commission to return to the Athabasca River and Landing. They left Wabasca on 6 September, travelling through the brilliant fall colours under fair skies.

> Foliage, . . was changing fast, the hues largely copper and russet; hard body-tints, yet beautiful. There were no maples here, as in the East, to add a glorious crimson to the scene; this was given by shrubs, not by trees. The tints were certainly, in the larger growths, less delicate here than there; the poplar's chrome was darker, the willow's mottled chrome more sere. But there was the exquisite pale canary of the birch, the blood-red and yellow of the wild rose, which glows in both hues, the rich crimson of the red willow, with its foil of ivory berries, and the ruddy copper of the high-bush cranberry . . . the great pigments of autumn, crimson, brown and yellow, were everywhere to be seen, beneath a deep blue sky strewn with snowy clouds.

Mair and his companions reached the mouth of the Pelican on 9 September and ended their voyage at Athabasca Landing nine days later. They had issued 1,843 scrip certificates, only 48 of which were for land.◆

Athabasca Landing, 1896, and the Company's sternwheeler 'Athabasca'.



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NORTHERN BOOKS

PETER SKENE OGDEN'S SNAKE COUNTRY JOURNALS 1827-28 and 1828-29

Edited by Glyndwr Williams, with an introduction and notes by David E. Miller and David H. Miller. Hudson's Bay Record Society, Vol. XXVIII, London, 1971. lxx, 201 pages, maps. Issued to members of the Society.

(Applications for membership, $5 a year, one volume published every second year, should be addressed to the Hon. Secretary, Hudson's Bay Record Society, Beaver House, Great Trinity Lane, London, EC4V 2AX England)

Reviewed by William R. Sampson

With the publication of this volume, the Hudson's Bay Record Society completes the series of Peter Skene Ogden's important Snake Country journals begun with the publication of the journals for 1824-25 and 1825-26 (Vol. XIII, 1950) and 1826-27 (Vol. XXIII, 1961). The present volume contains the daily journal entries of Ogden's fourth and fifth expeditions as well as the longest contemporary account by Ogden of his sixth and last expedition below the Columbia River, the disastrous trip to the Gulf of California and back through the Central Valley of California in 1829-30; in which, while returning to Fort Vancouver, Ogden's boat was caught in a whirlpool and nine men were drowned, three hundred beaver pelts were irretrievably submerged, and all of Ogden's papers and accounts were lost. Previously, scholars have had to rely on Agnes C. Laut's hasty and inaccurate transcription of these journals which were edited by T. C. Elliott for the *Quarterly of the Oregon Historical Society* in 1910. In the present volume, the full texts, carefully and accurately edited, are finally available. David E. Miller and David H. Miller have provided a valuable introduction and perceptive notes based on their intimate knowledge of the terrain in which Ogden was operating. In addition, in both the introduction and Appendix A, they convincingly argue that Ogden did not see the Great Salt Lake in 1825, but that it was on Christmas Day, 1828 that he first had 'a distant view'. The Millers confirm that Ogden did not visit the present site of Ogden, Utah in 1825, but that Ogden's Hole was located some miles distant. In this they offer an important correction to the previously published journals of Ogden's 1824-25 expedition, and the lingering question of Ogden's 'discovery' of Great Salt Lake in 1825 is given a negative answer.

The 1827-28 journal covers Ogden's return to the Snake River country as far as present-day Idaho Falls, Idaho and is primarily important for the report on the operations of American trappers in that area. On 26 September 1827, nineteen days after leaving Fort Nez Perce (Fort Walla Walla), Ogden was joined by an American trapping party in western Idaho. The party was accompanied by two men who had deserted Ogden's expedition during a tense encounter with an American trapping party on Utah's Weber River in May 1825, and Ogden was surprised and gratified to have one of them repay his debt of three year's standing. While at winter quarters near the mouth of the Portneuf River in eastern Idaho, Ogden was joined by an additional party of Americans under Samuel Tulloch (20 December 1827), and Americans were in and about Ogden's camps until 26 March 1828. But, unlike 1825, Ogden now held the upper hand, which pleased him, and he was able to secure furs from the Americans, treating them much like his own freemen under the liberalized price structure for trading goods and beaver pelts which John McLoughlin had effected in 1826 as a result of the confrontation and desertions at 'Deserter Point', Utah in 1825. The American party was not particularly welcome in Ogden's camp, for in their idleness they gambled and introduced playing cards to Ogden's men; still Ogden had to admit that with the Americans camped in close proximity he could keep a watch on their activities. During the intense winter, the most severe of the fur trade years, the snow reached depths which made the use of horses impossible, and Ogden set his men to making snowshoes. The Americans tried to return to their base near Great Salt Lake, but Ogden feared that they would return with liquor for the Indian trade and he forbade his men to trade snowshoes to the Americans no matter what the price, which reached eight beaver or $50.00. In this he was successful, but without snowshoes, the Americans could not hunt, so Ogden supplied them with meat. Ogden recognized the greater profits made by individual American trappers, and indeed was personally frustrated by the knowledge, for twice does he comment on the independent wealth garnered by American trappers and suppliers. (In one season, a trapper for the Americans could make enough to become independent, while it would take an H B C man ten years to collect a like amount.) Ogden was critical of the Americans and their seeming laziness and lack of initiative. They were indifferent about posting guards against Indian horse thieves and during the winter they gambled and showed little interest in beginning to make snowshoes which would have made hunting and travel possible; nor did they properly care for their horses. Ogden was gratified that none of his men deserted to the Americans.

Ogden was writing his journal for the eyes of the Governor and Committee in London, which accounts for his frequent references to the poor quality of his horses and traps and the scarcity of blankets. In addition he made frequent reference to his disagreement with his instructions regarding relations with the Indians. He considered the Snakes to be thieving and corrupt and would have punished them severely for their horse and trap stealing and occasional murders had the Company not forbidden it. He felt that by not being permitted to retaliate and punish the Indians, the British were held in contempt, and when the Americans suggested that Ogden cooperate with them in warring against the Indians he was held back by Company policy. His own hatred of the Snakes in particular is evidenced by his statement that for himself he 'would most willingly sacrifice a year and even two to exterminate the

ROBERT R. TAYLOR

Dwarf birch in autumn colours. Thelon River, N.W.T.

MALVINA BOLUS, S.M.

After fourteen years as Editor of *The Beaver*, Miss Bolus retired in August of this year. The best wishes of her friends with the Hudson's Bay Company go with her to Victoria. Her association with the magazine will continue as author of articles and as editor of an anthology of selected articles from the magazine.

whole Snake tribe, women and children excepted, and in so doing I am of opinion I could fully justify myself before God and Man'. He asks the gentlemen in London to 'come, endure and suffer as we have done and judge for yourselves if forbearance and submission has not been carried too far, even beyond the bounds ordained by Scripture, and surely this is the only guide that a Christian should follow'. Despite Company policy to the contrary, he felt that the conditions of the competition with the Americans warranted the introduction of liquor into the trade by the British. He also felt that the fur returns could be greatly increased if the Company would abandon its fixed posts and engage in more direct trade.

Ogden's journal for 1828-29 includes his account of the discovery of the Humboldt River and his exploration of the northern portion of the Great Basin. The journal is noteworthy for its description of the terrain (some of Ogden's directions are impossible, but this may be due to the errors of his clerk-copyist) and for the frequent references to the Indians and their mode of living. Ogden described the Indians of the Humboldt River area as being without bows or arrows but fat, living in tents and wearing shoes made from beaver hides (which Ogden considered to be a waste). Although, unlike the Snakes, the Indians of the Great Basin did not steal horses, they did steal traps. Over one hundred of Ogden's traps (two-thirds of his total supply) were lost on this trip, half of which were stolen. Ogden sighted Great Salt Lake on Christmas Day, 1828 and explored its northern shore, which he found to be as barren as the Americans had found the south shore.

The journals together are important for the information they give on the policy of the H B C to 'ruin' and impoverish the country south of the Columbia River in an effort to preclude American penetration and competition. However, Ogden decried the wanton destruction of the beaver, particularly during the spring hunt when females about ready to litter were taken. 'Did not we hold this country by so slight a tenure' he wrote, 'it would be most to our interest to trap only in the fall, and by this mode it would take many years to ruin it.' The journals provide many details about the daily life of Ogden's camp and insights into Ogden's own character: his concern for the welfare of his men, his regret that all too often his hunters brought back only choice pieces of meat and wasted the rest, his concern for his declining health, his belief in God and Scripture, his ability to send a man 'very politely to the Devil' and his fatalism — 'man is born to trouble and probably wild fowl also'. Ogden also provides insights into the habits of the 'shy' and wily beaver, noting in particular the 'lazy beaver' which having 'neglected to lay in a stock of provisions ... now [mid-January] find themselves obliged to work both in the ice and snow to obtain a living'.

It seems uncharitable when considering such a carefully edited volume to cavil at minor errors, but two or three must be mentioned. The author of *Peter Skene Ogden: Fur Trapper* is not Archie Bins but Binns. The death of Pierre Tevanitagou occurred in the fall of 1827 not the spring of 1828 (p. 66, n. 1, although the discussion of the same event on p. 63, n. 1 is correct). In his journal, Ogden clearly states that the men (those not gambling) were engaged in making snowshoes, yet the editors state that the snowshoes 'would be made by the women of the party'.

In addition to the two journals, this volume contains four appendices: the revisions for Ogden's route of 1824-25, and analysis of his 1829 map (a facsimile of which is included with the volume), his account of his last expedition south of the Columbia in 1829-30, and the accounts of his supplies and trading goods for the 1827-28 expedition (the corresponding accounts for 1828-29 have not been located). Included with the facsimile Ogden map is an excellent modern map, drawn by Mrs M. E. Sinclair, which reflects the Millers' extensive field work over almost every mile of Ogden's 1827-29 routes, as well as the corrected version of his route into Utah in 1825.

The General Editor and Drs David E. Miller and David H. Miller are to be commended for the high standards maintained in this latest volume of the Hudson's Bay Record Society. The Millers' introduction is readable as well as informative, particularly with regard to the competition between Ogden and the Americans, and their summary of Ogden's expeditions is most helpful to the reader who does not have their extensive knowledge of that still barren country. Once again historians will have to make revisions in their accounts and interpretations of the western fur trade in the late 1820s. With the publication of this, the final volume of Ogden's Snake Country journals, it is to be hoped that at some time in the future the Hudson's Bay Record Society will resume publication of materials on the Columbia Department. The important journals and/or letters of John Work (who succeeded Ogden in the Snake Country), Archibald McDonald (who was in charge of Fort Colvile), and the Fort St. James journals would be welcome and valuable additions to the materials already available for the study of the operations of the Hudson's Bay Company west of the Rockies.

William R. Sampson is Assistant Professor, Department of History at the University of Alberta.

PEOPLE AND PELTS
Selected Papers: Second North American Fur Trade Conference

Edited by Malvina Bolus.
Peguis Publishers, Winnipeg.
161 pages. $4.25.

Reviewed by James McCook

The Cree Indian, Maxwell Paupanekis of Norway House, explained that the experienced trapper usually carried his needle with thread in it, on his cap underneath the peak.

Professor K. G. Davies, then Visiting Fellow of all Souls College, Ox-

ford, discussed the 28-year freeze in the payments of dividends the Hudson's Bay Company had to impose from 1690 to 1718 when the fortunes of trade ran against it. A denial of the 'golden fruite' for so long as 28 years was almost unparalleled in business.

Elaine Mitchell, a graduate in history from McMaster University, made a case that Sir George Simpson, the Governor, considered dictatorial and harsh, was in fact 'a man of feeling' capable of disinterested kindness, loyalty, and affection.

These three authorities and 12 others, were speakers at the Second North American Fur Trade Conference in Winnipeg in 1970, sponsored by government agencies, historical and archaeological societies, universities and the Hudson's Bay Company.

The first conference was at St. Paul, Minnesota, in 1965 and revealed the interest in fur-trade subjects. Many of those who attended the fur trade conferences also shared in the Centennial Conference on the History of the Canadian West, a public affairs presentation of the University of Alberta held in Banff in 1967.

The Banff conference attracted papers and discussion of fur-trade interest: indeed, as Dr. W. Kaye Lamb recalls in his introduction to *People and Pelts*, it was the search for furs that motivated the exploration of the West and eventually carried British sovereignty overland to the Pacific. Wherever there is a conference on Western Canadian history there also must be the spirit of the chief factors, the chief traders and the voyageurs plus, of course, Sir George Simpson.

Elaine Mitchell's research on Simpson, the paper she prepared for the Winnipeg conference, and the questions she was asked, all serve to demonstrate the value of such gatherings. Authorities on different subjects bring the results of their studies before an audience of some 250 enthusiasts, who are informed critics.

Malvina Bolus edited the selected papers of the conference for this book which has a handsome collection of pictures. *People and Pelts* is sure to raise the question of when the next conference will be held and more nuggets of knowledge given circulation.

James McCook, now retired as associate editor of the Ottawa Journal has had a long time interest in western history.

NUNAGA: MY LAND, MY COUNTRY

By Duncan Pryde. M. G. Hurtig Ltd., Edmonton. 1971. 285 pages. Cloth $8.95

Reviewed by A. Stevenson

Dr Samuel Johnson, the famous English lexicographer and writer of the 18th century once said there was 'no more fearsome sight in the world' than a young Scotsman in London 'on the make'. One wonders if Dr Johnson would apply the same phrases to Scotsman Duncan Pryde in Arctic Canada after reading his book *Nunaga*.

The story covers a period of 16 years: from his arrival in Canada in 1955 to try his hand at fur trading in the service of the Hudson's Bay Company up to 1971 when he was a member of the Northwest Territories Council. For the most part the book describes in lively detail his life and inter-relationships with the Eskimo people both husbands and wives. The accounts of amorous escapades are bragging and tasteless, reflecting little concern for the women named. However, the book is an absorbing tale which remains in the mind long after the last chapter has been read.

The author, obviously believing that he was one of the last of the Arctic fur traders, tells of a way of life that had passed in many parts of the Arctic long before he came on the scene. True, if there was an isolated area left in the late 1950s where Eskimos still held to old customs, it was the Perry River – Bathurst Inlet Region. Many of the practices described, however, were never applicable to the whole of the Eskimo population.

Pryde is an articulate person and he writes as he speaks – clearly and directly. He tells of hunting the polar bear, caribou and seal. He tells how to build a snow house and how to handle a team of dogs. The spectacle of caribou in migration is vividly described.

In his discussion of the people, Pryde does little to shatter popular Eskimo myths; he may have even created a few. It is fairly common to hear a white man boast that he was adopted by the Eskimos – called son, song cousin or blood brother, and being paid the compliment 'you are a real Eskimo'. The author will know that often these tributes are no more than gestures made by a people who are traditionally polite. But it makes good copy, as does the section on shamanism which gives the impression that the shamans actually had a range of supernatural powers. It is true that their role was important in Eskimo society. They were the physicians and prophets and they developed their skills through long apprenticeship. The legends of their miracles and powers are part of Eskimo lore, but their day-to-day practical function was simply to restore harmony to a camp through mediation practices.

Duncan Pryde both as a trader who has mastered the language and as an able observer can write with authority on the Inuit people. He is, however, the only trader of whom I have heard who had to resort to fists to establish his position of confidence among the people. His background gives him insight into many of the deep emotional concerns felt by the northern people today. Society is demanding vast and rapid social adjustment of the Eskimo and men like Duncan Pryde, with a foot in both worlds, are in a strong position to advise and offer helpful criticism. He appears to accept this role for he closes *Nunaga* with the words, 'Like the Eskimos, my friends, I must look forward to new days, new opportunities and like them, new responsibilities in Canada's Arctic.'

The book carries in its centre section colour photographs of the land, the people, and the author.

Alex Stevenson has been associated with the Arctic and its people for more than thirty-five years as fur trader and federal administrator.

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